

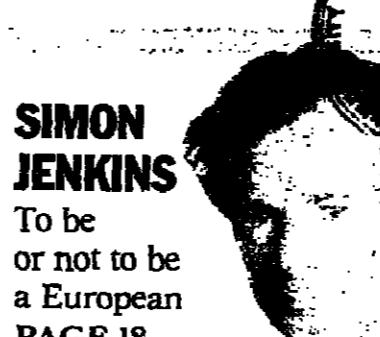
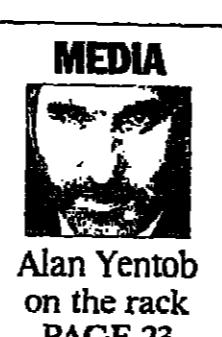
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WEDNESDAY JUNE 12 1996



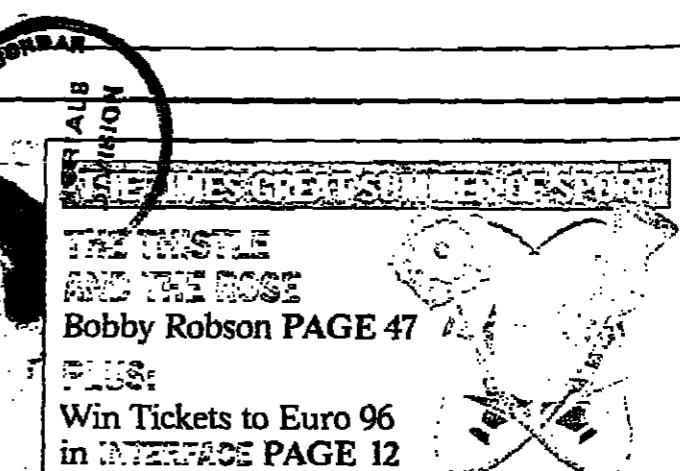
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To be or not to be a European
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PLUS:
Win Tickets to Euro 96 in INTERFACE PAGE 12

Lessons in basic classroom skills

Teachers will get their own curriculum

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

A NEW "national curriculum" for teachers is to be announced tomorrow to make sure that young people entering the profession have the basic skills to teach children to read, write and add up.

Teachers will also be given stronger powers to enforce discipline — even against parents' wishes — as part of the Government's attempt to raise standards in schools at a time when Britain's children are lagging behind pupils in other countries.

The drive to "teach teachers to teach" comes after years of complaints from students emerging from training colleges that they have not been taught the fundamentals of the job. Now Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, aims to make sure that they follow a core curriculum in college just as children have to in schools. Those who fail to meet the tougher new standards will not be able to progress in their career.

A senior government source said: "The time is ripe for us to make sure we show our teachers how to teach. After all, doctors have to learn how to do their job. So many of our teachers come out of college enthusiastic, their heads full of education psychology, but having received very little instruction on how to teach children to read, write and do sums."

Mrs Shephard is also considering measures to improve the performance of the existing 400,000 teachers, possibly including retraining in basic skills, while heads are to be given management and financial tuition to take account of the fact that running a school is now often the same as running a business.

The plans are part of Mrs

Shephard's campaign to subject all teachers to much more rigorous appraisal and to make it easier for governors to identify poor teachers and, if necessary, dismiss them.

The Education Secretary will make her announcement against the damaging back-drop of a report ranking the educational achievements of children in Britain against those in America, France, Germany and Singapore. Although Britain does relatively well in higher education, the tables show a serious problem in basic numeracy and literacy among 16- and 18-year-olds.

The comparison — the first of its kind carried out by a British government — was Michael Heseltine's idea and will be published in a White Paper on competitiveness. It shows that skills are improving in all the countries covered, underlining Britain's difficulty in catching up. But ministers say there have been strong improvements since 1990 and that the Government has brought in a wide range of measures to improve standards after 120 years of neglect under governments of all colours.

A senior source said: "It shows clearly that while we are doing well enough in some areas, we are not doing very well in others. We can do better and will do better." Mrs Shephard claimed that the Government had carried through the most radical programme of change for schools in memory, and accused Labour of hypocrisy and hubris. "You oppose grant-maintained schools but Mr Blair is sending his son to one. You oppose grammar schools and now you find that Ms Harman has chosen to send her son to one."

Second degree, page 43

Electricity bills set to fall

The average household electricity bill is set to fall by between £15 and £20 a year after privatisation this summer of British Energy, the state-owned nuclear generator. The cut will come from a reduction in the levy added to bills to subsidise the decommissioning costs of the nuclear industry. Page 27

Major attacks lottery payout to gays

By JILL SHERMAN AND JOANNA BALE

THE National Lottery Charities Board last night stood by its decision to distribute lottery money to gay and lesbian groups after the Prime Minister criticised the awards as "ill-founded and ill-judged".

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, has written to David Sieff, the board's chairman, to express the Government's concern over four of the 2,229 awards announced yesterday, and asking the board to justify the decision.

However, one of the recipients, a Scottish group helping prostitutes, already receives

The National Lottery Charities Board

government help, being funded by Lothian Health Board.

John Major told MPs in the Commons that some awards "do not in my judgment reflect the way that Parliament and public expected the lottery money to be spent". A Downing Street spokesman said his comments had been aimed at four West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign (£66,000); the Leicester Lesbian, Gay and Bi-Sexual Centre (£50,000); the Gay London Policing Group (£26,000); and the Scottish Prostitutes Education Project (£52,000).

The National Lottery Charities Board immediately issued a statement standing by its decision.

A spokeswoman pointed out that it had given awards to 2,229 charities and voluntary groups amounting to £159 million. The theme was to focus on youth issues and those on low incomes.

"Questions have been asked

about some of these grants to some particularly vulnerable groups," said the statement.

"We consider all applications we receive on their merit. All groups which have been of

fered grants today submitted

excellent applications to the board which were assessed

thoroughly against our criteria. They have succeeded on the basis of merit."

The spokeswoman pointed out the projects associated with gay and lesbian people and deportees amounted to only 1 per cent of the £159 million awarded.

Downing Street sources claimed Mrs Bottomley had alerted the Prime Minister when given the list yesterday.

But they emphasised that existing legislation meant the Government has no powers to block or change the awards. It was advised but not consulted.

Continued on page 2, col 1

Docklands bomb suspect is charged

PATRICK MCKINLEY, 32, a car mechanic from Mullaghbawn, near Forkhill in South Armagh, was charged yesterday with the IRA bombing at London's South Quay in February. He was remanded in custody by Belmarsh magistrates in south London.

The lorry bomb in Docklands exploded hours after the IRA ended its 17-month truce, killing two men.

One suspect arrested in Ulster has been freed on bail and two other men are being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

England squad cheered by pot shots at watching media

By OLIVER HOLT

TERRY VENABLES and his embattled England football squad attempted to give the media a taste of their own medicine yesterday as the post mortem into the team's dismal draw with Switzerland on Saturday continued and a new scandal broke about three of the players drinking in a nightclub after the match.

Venables, the England coach, accused sections of the press of trying to turn the public against the team and said he and his players considered them "traitors".

On the training pitch at the team's Bisham Abbey headquarters in Buckinghamshire, Teddy Sheringham, one of the trio spotted at the Faces nightclub in Ilford, Essex, drew raucous applause

from the rest of the squad when an attempted shot on goal flew wide, straight into a photographer's camera. Others attempted the trick after that with varying degrees of success.

Two players, David Platt, the captain, and David Seaman, the goalkeeper, were allowed to speak to the media in the interview tent. Known as two of the most diplomatic members of the squad, they were courteous and polite, but Venables left little doubt that they were chosen because most of their teammates would have been more hostile.

"The criticism we have had is awful," Venables said. A few of the critics were "turning the public against the players and that can affect support in the stadium. The advantage of having this

tournament at home is disappearing because of this."

"Every time a big tournament comes around, the lengths people go to get worse and worse, I do not understand why people do what they do to Gazz [Paul Gascoigne]. What was so wrong with his performance on Saturday? What is the point of trying to turn the public against the team?" Venables also made a point of defending the Ilford Three: Sheringham, Jamie Redknapp and Sol Campbell. "The Italian players drink wine every day," he said. "These boys have sat in a corner and had a couple of beers. They have not upset anyone and it is okay by me."

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"I'll take that one"

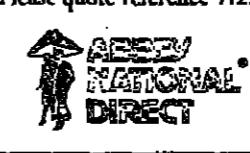
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Ten-minute tiger haunted by a fearful symmetry

William, William, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

It was apposite that Bill Cash chose Blake as the poet laureate for his referendum crusade yesterday, though that was not the verse he quoted. For there is a fearful symmetry about the Conservative MP for Stafford. His speeches are delivered rather than spoken, all in a strangely monotonous evenness of tone declaratory, with just a touch

of the trumpet, but weirdly passionless.

Mr Cash speaks as though sleepwalking. His argument walks somehow with its arms out parallel, straight in front of it, absolutely determined upon its course, guided by a greater force, curiously impervious to its surroundings. Watching a Cash oration (and they are the same whether made to an audience of one, over the testable, or to an audience of 400, as yesterday, in the Commons chamber) one remains unsettled by the thought that all at once somebody might wake him up, and

he would drop his speechnotes and fall silent, amazed at where he was, who he was, whom he was talking to, and what he was telling them.

Cash had arrived early, before Prime Minister's Questions. He sat down, fumbled in his inside breast pocket for his notes, pulled them out to check they were all there, returned them to the pocket, pretended to listen for a while,

moved and unmoving, like some huge malign doll: a curse on the House of Cash.

Mr Cash's speech began, continued and ended with a sort of automaticity, as might the liturgy in a Mass. The words and sentiments well known, but repeated as an expression of faith. Only when he mouthed the phrase "German domination" did a sort of horror shine through with real and momentary passion. Dislike of something foreign breathed through the entire performance but never quite took visible shape, except here. It gave the game

away. Odd, then, that the Blake which Mr Cash chose to quote was:

"A truth that's told with bad intent

Beats all the lies you can invent" ... for this was the thought which troubled those who found little in Cash's argument to dissent from, yet remained troubled by its expression.

The Bill was opposed by Tony Banks (Lab, Newhaven NW) in facetious and perfunctory fashion, his principal argument being that Sir James Goldsmith was a mocking call from dozens of doubters.

"Sir John Biffen."

"Sir James Goldsmith."

"John Redwood."

"Sir James Goldsmith."

Bill Cash had given us the end of a golden string. Who, or what, lay at the other end was less clear.

SIMON WALKER



Bill Cash and his wife Biddy before walking to the Commons for the debate on a European referendum

Mackay accepts concessions to save divorce Bill

BY FRANCES GIBB AND JILL SHERMAN

THE Lord Chancellor will accept two crucial changes to the Government's divorce law reforms in a last-ditch attempt to save the Bill.

With the final vote on the Family Law Bill on Monday, Lord Mackay of Clashfern indicated yesterday that he would table an amendment removing compulsory mediation for couples on legal aid.

Under the existing proposals, divorcing couples have to go through mediation, unless it is unsuitable, before being eligible for legal aid. Under the new plan they would have to meet a mediator, but only to be given information.

As it stands, the Bill favours mediation over legal advice. Now couples will be entitled to legal advice, whether they have been through mediation or not.

Lord Mackay also hinted at a second change. The Government is likely to back an amendment tabled by Sir James Lester, Tory MP for Broxtowe, to ensure the three-month waiting period after a divorce petition is lodged — a change forced on the Government in committee — would be

included in the main timeframe of 18 months and not added to it.

Yesterday the future of the Bill hung in the balance, with 100 Tory rebels seeking to muster opposition when it comes up for third reading on Monday and Labour also threatening to scupper it.

Labour is to decide its tactics at a Shadow Cabinet meeting today. Paul Boateng, legal affairs spokesman, has indicated that Labour will abstain or vote against the Bill if the Government fails to accept a number of amendments it has tabled on domestic violence.

Edward Leigh, who is leading the Tory rebellion, still holding out for two concessions. He argues the Bill should offer a "conscience clause", allowing couples to state why they wished to divorce, and a litigation-free period to stop speedy divorces.

Mr Leigh has invited the 109 Tories who rebelled against the Government over the "no-fault" clause at the second reading to a meeting in the Commons tomorrow. The present law, with "its premium on bringing in fault if you want a quick divorce", would continue, he said.

groups urged party leaders to ensure the Bill was carried. In a letter headed by David French, who convenes the Family Law Bill Coalition, the writers — who include Anglican and Methodist churchmen, Relate, the Mothers' Union and the Jewish Marriage Council — say it would be a "lost opportunity" if the Bill was rejected.

But the Law Society, which has withdrawn its support from the Bill, says the Family Law Bill would prove costly to implement — anything from £20 million to £50 million — would be unworkable and a bonanza for lawyers.

It was the society, in alliance with right-wing Tory MPs, which secured the removal of the presumption in favour of mediation.

But yesterday, in a riposte to critics, Lord Mackay warned that if his proposals were lost, fault-based based divorce would remain the quick, easy way for thousands to end their marriages.

The present law, with "its premium on bringing in fault if you want a quick divorce", would continue, he said.

Major attacks cash for gays

Continued from page 1

Officials admitted that no attempt had been made to find out about the four groups before the Prime Minister made his comments in the Commons.

It emerged last night that the Gay London Policing group (Galop) was awarded £26,100 for a year to employ a full-time worker to support gay men and lesbians under 25 who have been victims of homophobic abuse and vio-

lent crimes.

The Leicester Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Centre was awarded £49,586 for the development of a counselling and support service for lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in the city. The grant, over three years, will pay for part-time and sessional youth workers and fund related running costs.

The West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign in Birmingham received £65,858

spread over three years to provide an information service for asylum-seekers.

The Scottish Prostitutes Education Project will use its £81,553 to fund a youth worker, office and running costs for counselling work with young male and female prostitutes.

Meanwhile, another group, the National Missing Persons Helpline, threatened to give back its £35,000, claiming the money was "disappointing and worthless".

Britain yesterday applied its veto to four proposed EU measures, all relating to culture, bringing the number of initiatives blocked in the beef war to 78. On its side, the Commission formally ordered the lifting of the ban on the export of by-products gelatine, tallow and bull semen. Only the semen is back on the world market because stringent controls must be applied in Britain before gelatine and tallow will be certified for export.

The Italian Government, which hosts the EU summit on Monday 21-22, is working with the Irish, who take on the EU presidency next month, to save the Florence gathering from being taken hostage by Britain's beef demands. John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, who held meeting with Mr Santer yesterday, was more cautious. "I consider that the objective can be achieved if

said the EU could give its blessing to a "scaffolding" but "filling in the gaps" would come after the Florence summit. Britain's senior veterinary official voiced doubts on likely progress in Brussels. Keith Meldrum, the Chief Veterinary Officer, said the Standing Veterinary Committee, the body which must approve all steps in the beef affair, would vote on Friday on whether Britain's programme of eradication was acceptable as a starting point for easing the ban. Whether the British plan will get support is a moot point," he said.

The veterinary committee, which represents member states, has been regarded by Britain as the villain in the beef affair since it rejected the original proposal to lift the beef ban.

Europe exchanges, page 11
Simon Jenkins, page 18

Dublin insists Mitchell must chair all-party talks

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT, AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

DUBLIN stepped up pressure on Unionists last night to accept George Mitchell as chairman of the all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland. Negotiations on the former American senator remained deadlocked.

During intensive talks throughout the day at Stormont, Irish ministers insisted that Mr Mitchell would have to be appointed and they rejected a proposal by Ulster Unionists to weaken the chairman's powers.

However, they and their British counterparts tried to respond to Unionist concerns by agreeing to set up a committee to examine the role of the chairman. Under the plan, Mr Mitchell would chair the main session of the talks while the committee reviewed last week's Anglo-Irish document which appointed him.

Talks continued late into the evening on the proposals by

John Bruton, the Irish Prime Minister, demanded that Sinn Fein condemn the suspected IRA murder of a policeman in Limerick last week or face the consequences. Mr Bruton said he was "deeply disturbed and shocked" by Sinn Fein's attitude after Pat Doherty, its vice-president, appeared on television and did not condemn the shooting of Detective Jerry McCabe in Adare.

The governments and the Ulster Unionists. However, a senior Irish source rejected the Unionist plan to weaken the power of the chairman. "If he wants to scratch himself he would have to get the permission of the parties. It would be a recipe for a procedural nightmare."

The acrimonious atmosphere was underlined by the opening of the main talks lasting for only 15 minutes in the morning. The parties then

broke off for a series of individual meetings between ministers, the politicians and Mr Mitchell.

The latter held separate meetings with the Rev Ian Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionists, and David Trimble, the leader of the Ulster Unionists, to reassure them that he would be an impartial chairman. The two men said that the meetings had done nothing to change their view of his position.

By last night the atmosphere had worsened. Mr Paisley accused one of the Irish ministers at the talks of warning that there would be "bodies on the streets" if Unionists refused to accept Mr Mitchell as chairman.

Mr Paisley complained about the comments to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary. An Irish Government source last night rejected Mr Paisley's allegation. He said: "It is absolute nonsense. None of the ministers would make a suggestion like that."

world. He knew that it could be a bumpy ride."

Unionists object to Mr Mitchell because they believe that his close association with President Clinton makes him too sympathetic to nationalists. The Democratic Unionists and the United Kingdom Unionists appear determined to unseat Mr Mitchell in spite of the widespread praise he received for his report on disarming terrorist weapons earlier this year.

Asda ready for new offensive in drug price war

By DOMINIC KENNEDY, SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

ASDA is preparing to launch its own range of cheap over-the-counter remedies on Monday in the next stage of the drug price war.

Yesterday the supermarket chain was forced to stop selling Anadin paracetamol at half the retail price when the manufacturer obtained a week-long injunction. But Asda responded by stripping its shelves of the product, leaving its own paracetamol tablets on sale at a fraction of the price.

The company's action illustrated the gap between the price fixed by drug manufacturers under the 26-year-old resale price maintenance (RPM) agreement and that charged by supermarkets.

Asda, which last year destroyed the penultimate bastion of price-fixing, the Net Book Agreement, is preparing for a repeat performance by attacking the price of medicines. Britain's 8,000 independent neighbourhood pharmacists, which have already seen supermarkets move into a large portion of their territory, fear that many will be unable to compete and will have to close.

Asda has been making highly secret preparations to launch a range of remedies on Monday. The company said last year that it hoped to increase its selection of low-price vitamins and minerals from 19 basic products to 50 but rivals have been wondering when this was due.

Observers suspected the assault on Anadin was a publicity coup to draw attention to the high cost of drugs.

A source said that a launch with a great fanfare" was being prepared for next Monday.

Asda cut the price of packs of 24 Anadin paracetamol from £1.72 to 80p this Monday. On the same day it reduced the price of its own brand from 49p to 24p.

In the High Court yesterday, Mr Justice Cope granted a temporary injunction to Whitehall Laboratories, the manufacturer of Anadin, which was acting to defend the price-fixing agreement. Asda, which has 207 stores, is now promoting its own brand at 1p per tablet compared with the 7p price of Anadin.

Gary Hickinbottom, solicitor for Whitehall Laboratories, said: "There is nothing to stop Asda selling its own-brand paracetamol at whatever price it likes. But if it wishes to sell Anadin, it must stick to the RPM price."

Nick Cooper, corporate counsel for Asda, said: "We are seeking to offer what we regard as much better value on this product than we feel the RPM offers. We would not dispute that there should be support for small chemists, but this is not the best way to do it."

Gwynn Burr, marketing director for Asda, said: "We estimate that for every pound spent by the customer on Anadin Paracetamol, 80 per cent is profit margin for manufacturer and retailer. So much for the argument that this is all about support for neighbourhood pharmacists."

Unease at televised swearing increases

The Broadcasting Standards Council called for televised talks with leading television companies to discuss growing public concern about rising levels of bad language on television.

Lady Howe of Aberavon, chairman of the council, said there had been a steady increase in audience anxiety about swearing and blasphemy over the past four years. The council's annual monitoring report showed that concern over swearing on television increased from 26 to 28 per cent. In contrast, concern about television violence fell from 66 to 57 per cent.

Millennium cash

The Corporation of London pledged more than £5 million yesterday to the Millennium Exhibition. The money is to help finance one of 12 pavilions planned for the £500 million exhibition in Greenwich. The deadline set by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, for declarations of private sector support is tomorrow.

Woman strangled

A woman was found strangled after her ten-year-old son returned from a weekend visit with his father, Shirley Brown, 46, of Lowton, near Manchester, who was studying for an English literature degree, had been strangled with a pair of tights and was possibly sexually assaulted by her killer, police said.

Gritting radar

A weather radar that can tell the difference between rain and drizzle, sleet and wet snow, hail or freezing rain, was unveiled by the Meteorological Office. With its help local authorities which buy the service will be able to pinpoint exactly when and where to send out road gritters in winter, reducing waste and saving money.

Gurkhas posted

Four hundred Gurkhas saved from redundancy last year to bolster infantry regiments are to be attached to the 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment, the Prince of Wales' Royal Regiment and the Scots Guards. Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, said: "They will serve as separate companies within the regiments."

Exam washout

Hundreds of unmarked English language GCSE exam papers have been found floating in a river in Coventry after they went missing from a Parcel Force depot in the city. The condition of the papers is being assessed but the affected pupils from a school at St Helena, Merstham, have been told they will not have to retake the exam.

Teenage killer

A teenager who beat a 66-year-old man to death in his home at Northampton was sentenced to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. Andrew Sheehan, 18, pleaded guilty at Oxford Crown Court to murdering Stephen Reilly last September. He was said to have believed, wrongly, that Mr Reilly had indecently assaulted a friend.

Sale success

The first day of a two-day sale of items from the Marques of Bristol's ancestral home, Wickham House in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, raised almost £800,000. Lord Bristol, 41, ordered the sale after deciding to move out of his apartments to save money. Only 12 of the 384 lots on offer were left unsold by late afternoon.

Vintage sounds

A CD consisting of the sounds of 14 different wines fermenting is being sold by Fortnum & Mason, the London grocer. The Sound of Wine, which plays for an hour, was recorded last Christmas Eve by the Australian winemaker Will Parris, with the help of Paul Passer, a broadcaster. Fortnum's is selling the CDs for £9.95.

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BRINGING

Inquest told that friends who shot themselves had no links with right-wing groups

Graduate in suicide pact knew she was pregnant

By PAUL WILKINSON



Stephen Bateman and Jane Greenhow, who set up home with Fleming after meeting in Leicester

A YOUNG British graduate who killed herself in a suicide pact with her boyfriend at an American shooting range was pregnant, an inquest was told yesterday.

Ruth Fleming and Stephen Bateman, both 22, killed themselves at a shooting range in Mesa, Arizona, by placing handguns in their mouths and squeezing the triggers. Their friend Jane Greenhow, also 22, shot herself after hearing of their deaths.

Fleming was 12 weeks' pregnant and would have known she was expecting a child, Geoffrey Burt, the Durham coroner, said.

The inquest was told that Fleming, from Bowburn, Co Durham, and Greenhow, from Harrogate, North Yorkshire, had studied astro-physics at Leicester University. They graduated with honours in 1994. While students they had made friends with Bateman, a drop-out originally from Boston, Lincolnshire.

When the two women found work last summer as computer programmers with a firm in Farnham, Surrey, all three set up home in a house in Andover, Hampshire. Shortly before the new year they sold all their possessions and Fleming

sister had not been acting unusually or expressed any peculiar political or philosophical opinions during the run-up to her disappearance.

In a written statement Detective Don Schoch of the Arizona police said that Fleming and Bateman had shot themselves after firing almost 50 pistol rounds at targets. When they got to the last six bullets they turned their guns on themselves. They had only 84 cents in cash between them.

It appeared that at some point previously Greenhow had separated from them and travelled a thousand miles to California. Detective Schoch had traced her through her hire car and asked the rental clerk to get her to contact police when she returned the vehicle.

The next thing he heard was that she had killed herself the day after being told by hire company representatives of the two suicides.

The hearing was told that all three friends were found in black combat-style clothes when they died: Fleming's toenails were painted black and she had a tattoo — described as an unusual geometric shape — on her left upper arm.

Checks of Fleming's credit cards showed the group had flown to Detroit on January 6 via Washington and then on to Las Vegas. They spent seven weeks touring the western states before arriving in Mesa the day before the deaths. Checks with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Secret Service had failed to find any links with far-right-wing groups active in the area, the detective said.

Mr Burt said there was no evidence that the three had been involved in right-wing politics despite the fact that all were found wearing black military-style clothing and the car used by Fleming and Bateman contained several books by Friedrich Nietzsche, the 19th-century German philosopher. They included *Thus*



Ruth Fleming, who killed herself in Arizona alongside Bateman

Spake Zarathustra in which he expounded his theory of the "Übermensch" or superior race, which was later espoused by Hitler.

Stuck in the book like a marker was a rambling suicide note written by Mr Bateman in which he talks of saying his farewells and burying his CD collection near a cactus to avoid "the enemy"

getting it. He ends the letter: "357 bullet has done my bidding. I will not go towards the light." It is signed "yours faithfully", but the last word is crossed out and "finally" substituted.

Recording a verdict of suicide, Mr Burt said: "There is nothing to explain their decision to take their lives. Whether it was the knowledge of

Miss Fleming's pregnancy, the split from Miss Greenhow, or their rejection of contemporary moral values as expounded by Friedrich Nietzsche is not possible to say. It was possibly all three. These were premeditated and inexplicable deaths."

No inquest has been held on Greenhow as her body was cremated in America.

Weavers gamble on factory for future

By STEPHEN FARRELL

THE Harris Tweed weavers of the Outer Hebrides, fearful for their future in a declining industry, are gambling on buying a mill that closed down last year when its owners went into liquidation with a deficit of £750,000.

The Harris Tweed Weavers' Association plans to raise £300,000 from members in a co-operative venture. Willie Macleod, association chairman, last night headed a meeting at which 100 weavers discussed proposals to raise the necessary finance by buying shares in the mill and offering them to outsiders.

Traditionally, the cloth is produced by islanders in their homes. But a massive decline in foreign markets over 30 years and a switch to larger looms by 60 of the 400 weavers left the remainder fearing for their future.

Faced with the prospect of personal contracts tying them even closer to the three remaining mills, the association voted unanimously last month to buy the disused mill belonging to the Stornoway company Lewis and Harris Textiles.

Mr Macleod, a weaver for 17 years, said: "Traditional weavers feel they are getting a raw deal with changes in the industry, and if they don't do something to take control of their own destiny they will continue to lose out."

Experts pointed out that the Harris Tweed industry, now worth £6 million a year to the Western Isles economy, has declined from selling 7.5 million metres in 1966 to 1.8 million in 1995.

"What they are planning is very risky. The mill went bust last year because the market was not there. There is not much point producing all this wonderful fabric if no one is going to buy it," one industry insider said.

Ian Mackenzie, chief executive of the Harris Tweed Authority, said: "Things are in a bit of a turmoil at the moment, but we still hope to have 400 weavers on the new [larger] loom by 2000."

'If there is any existence I fear it may be packed with proles'

STEPHEN BATEMAN'S suicide note, written in block capitals on notepaper from an Oregon hotel reads:

Had some rather fetching photographs taken of me in 'majestic poses' in front of the 'Hind'. I lost them. I never lost anything!

I think they were left at hotel in Weston Supermare. I purloined rose clouds of holocaust when I sold my record collection, but I kept my DJ CDs rather than have them fall into enemy hands.

I intend to bury them in Arizona near a cacti. I would do it in Nevada however the

police might be looking for a white Ford and this is too much of a risk.

I think it was Lulworth Cove upon the cliffs I said my farewell to all that soul had craved in that land. If you shall "see me again" (your words Mr P) I will be there before you. If there is any sort of existence (this life can barely be called existing), I fear it may be packed with proles 'untermenschen' so I will follow the advice of a Polish girl after that: '357 bullet has done my bidding' I will not "go towards the light".

Yours faithfully,
Stephen B aka Eugene Beckmann.

Police pay saboteur five times for arrests

By JOANNA BALE



A HUNT saboteur has won five out-of-court settlements from a police force in four years.

Simon Wild, 38, was awarded £500 by Sussex Police after he threatened to bring a case of wrongful arrest against the force. The payment followed an incident at the Chiddington, Leconfield and Cowdray Hunt near Petworth, West Sussex, last October where he was arrested for saying "Oink, oink" to a policeman.

Mr Wild, who has two children, had already received £1,800 in out-of-court awards from Sussex Police in similar cases, involving unlawful arrest and trespass against the person after the police searched his pockets. The force paid £1,000 of his legal costs when he issued writs in three of the cases.

Six years ago he won £75 plus £2,000 in costs from the Hampshire force after bringing a successful court case in which he accused officers of using excessive force during an arrest. He has also won two appeals against convictions connected with his activities with West Sussex Wildlife Protection.

Mr Wild, of Bognor, West Sussex, said: "I have cost the police nearly £5,000 plus their own costs in the last six years. The money means I can afford to keep going to demos and

McVicar 'broke man's nose in row over dog'

By RICHARD DUCE

A WRITER broke his neighbour's nose and then threatened to kill him in a dispute over their dogs, a court was told yesterday.

John McVicar, 56, forced his way into the home in Bawdsey, southwest London, of Scott Caisley, an advertising executive, and repeatedly head-butted him after he answered the door in his dressing gown. Kingston Crown Court was told.

The prosecution alleges that Mr McVicar carried out the assault after complaining that his neighbour's dog had bitten his mongrel.

Mr Caisley said that Mr McVicar knocked at his back door and then punched him so hard he fell four feet across the kitchen and onto the refrigerator. His nose was broken.

"I just saw a huge blinding flash, then it was black, then just pain. He leapt into the flat after me. He had his arms round my throat — he grabbed my and head-butted me over and over again."

"He said over and over again: 'I'll kill you.' He was looking at me in the eye and then he was looking at some knives I had in the kitchen." Mr Caisley, 27, said he eventually succeeded in pushing Mr McVicar away and telephoned the police.

Mr McVicar, who is conducting his own defence, de-

Zulu VC sold to private collector

By KYLE SMITH

A VICTORIA CROSS won at the defence of Rorke's Drift, dramatised in the film *Zulu*, failed to reach its pre-sale estimate when it fetched £80,000 at auction yesterday.

The medal, one of 11 awarded in the battle, was bought by an anonymous private collector, disappointing the family of Private Robert Jones, who had hoped it would go to his regimental museum. Private Jones, 21, played a crucial part in the inspired stand of 153 British soldiers against 4,000 Zulu warriors in January 1879.

His family urged that the medal should be returned to the regimental museum of the South Wales Borderers in Brecon, where the other six VCs won in the battle by B Company, 2nd/24th Regiment, are displayed. None had ever seen the medal before as it has been in the hands of collectors for decades. It was last sold in 1950 for £98.

Julianne Butlin, 23, a great-great granddaughter, said: "It's a great loss. We'll probably never see it again."

Michael Naxton, a medal expert acting on behalf of the collector, said the buyer might consider allowing it to be exhibited in Wales. "It's a fascinating bit of British history," he said. Dix and Webb, the auctioneers, had hoped the medal would beat the record £132,000 paid for a VC in 1992.



McVicar: claimed he acted in self-defence

The long-range forecast: cloudy in 50,000 years

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE solar system is heading for a cloud of interstellar dust and gas up to a million times denser than what we have been used to, according to astronomers.

For the past five million years — the time human life has taken to evolve on Earth — we have been moving through a volume of interstellar space that is practically empty. It cannot last, astronomers reported at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society this week. Some time in the next 50,000 years the solar system is likely to encounter much denser clouds, with effects that are difficult to predict.

Dr Jeffrey Linsky of the University of Colorado reported that telescope readings taken in 18 different direc-

tions had found that the Sun and its planets are on the very edge of an egg-shaped cloud of dust and gas. Another cloud, he said, may be as near as 20,000 years away, although the distance is still uncertain.

"We don't know when or exactly how the Earth will be affected."

When it happened it would change the flow of the solar wind — the particles that stream out from the Sun's corona — and could expose us to greater radiation. The Sun could also appear dimmer behind much thicker clouds of material.

Both these effects could theoretically affect the weather on Earth. Dr Linsky said: "Just how remains uncertain, but I am sure there will be an effect." Dr Priscilla Frisch, a University of Chicago astrophysicist, explained that

the solar system lay on an arm of the Milky Way galaxy and was rotating around it at about 60 light years every million years.

Within this part of the galaxy were stellar formations in which stars were living and dying, creating vast clouds of gas and dust. Some of these clouds were expanding outward at high speeds. For millions of years we had moved between the clouds, but that could change.

Dr Frisch said that passage into a cloud of greater density would first change the heliosphere, the area surrounding the solar system that is under the influence of the solar wind.

"There could be dramatic effects on the inner solar system," she said. The changed heliosphere could cause an increase in cosmic rays striking the Earth, reshape the Earth's magneto-

sphere — which is the magnetic bubble that surrounds the planet — and possibly change the chemistry of the atmosphere.

How this would affect life on Earth is not known. Dr Frisch noted, however, that some researchers had suggested that earlier ice ages might have been caused by the solar system passing through interstellar clouds.

She said that interstellar clouds could have a bearing on where life could evolve in the universe. Stars that were passing in and out of dense clouds would have a highly changeable environment, a condition that might prevent the formation of fragile life.

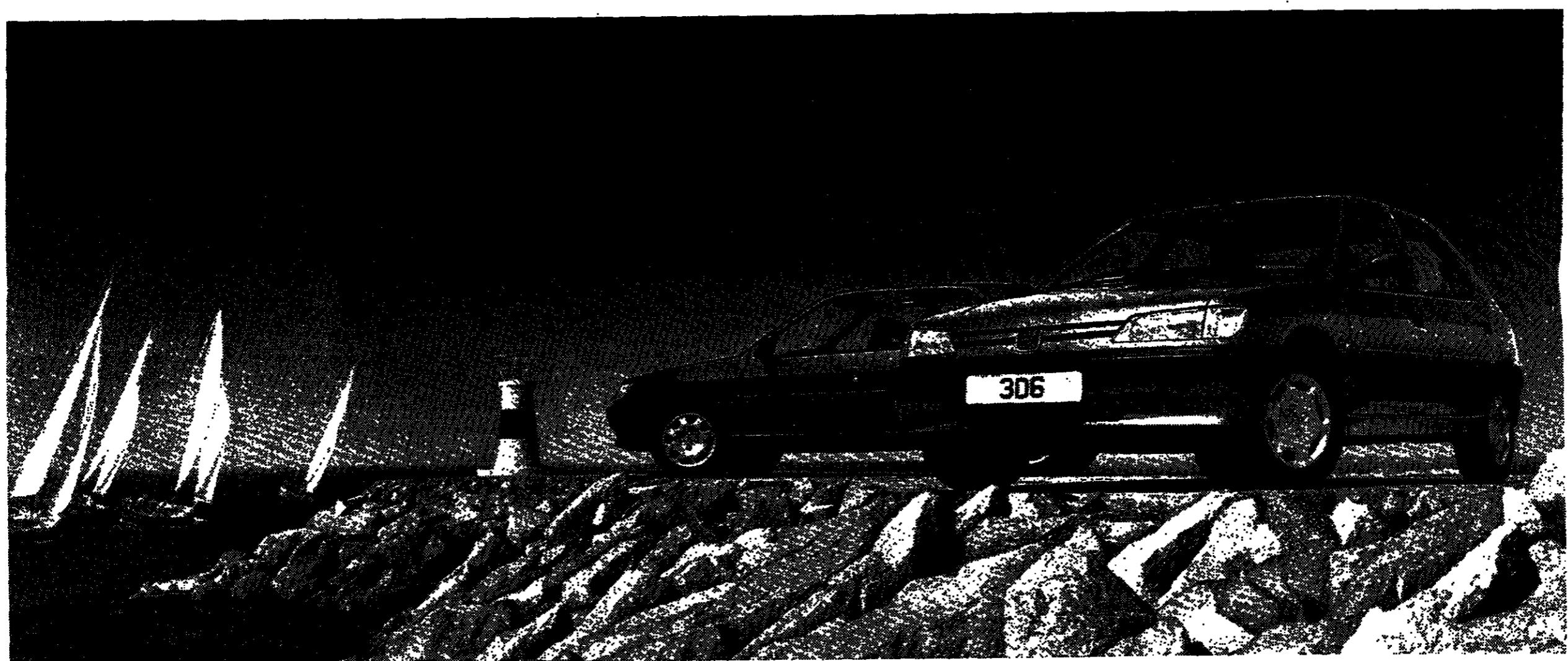
"Without stability in the local stellar environment, I doubt there could be stable planetary climates hospitable to life," she said.

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جدة ١٥٠

Diocese split as traditionalists say restoration would be symbolic victory against IRA

City rejects glass plan for bomb-hit medieval church

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

CITY of London planners yesterday threw out the modern glass-fronted design proposed for the medieval church of St Ethelburga, badly damaged by the IRA's Bishopsgate bomb in 1993.

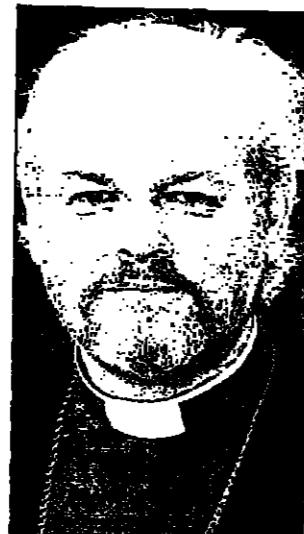
The decision was immediately welcomed by conservationists and church traditionalists who are fighting to resurrect St Ethelburga as it was before the bomb, when it was regarded in the City as a gem. St Ethelburga survived the Blitz and was also one of eight churches in the City which predated the Great Fire of London. Many churchmen believe it must be restored for historical continuity and to represent a symbolic victory against terrorism.

However, other senior figures in the London diocese believe the church, which had been declared redundant, should not be rebuilt because the City has too many churches and does not need another.

The modern design, by architects Blee Ettwein Bridges, defeated eight other designs to win a competition intended to find the best way to redevelop the site. It has the backing of the Bishop's Council of the London diocese of the Church of England. But City planners voted 18-1 against the design on conservation grounds, deeming it inappropriate for what was the City's smallest church, a Grade I listed building.

The £3 million scheme would have involved encasing the ruins of St Ethelburga in a modern-style glass and copper-covered steel structure, including a garden, gallery and office building. Objectors included the Ancient Monument Society, the Royal Fine Art Commission, the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, the London Society, the Retail Traders Association, the City Heritage Society and the Friends of St Ethelburga.

Benjamin Hall, of Farringdon Within, said: "The essential point is that it [St



Chartres must decide which plan to support

Ethelburga] is still a listed building. There is a complete failure in this scheme to respect the integrity of the two-thirds of the building which remains."

Archdeacon Galloway, deputy chairman of the planning committee, said: "I don't like the glass front. It is an inappropriate postage stamp to put in that particular place. Something needs to happen here, but regrettably I do not think this is the right answer."

Anthony Graves, of Bishopsgate, said: "This was a jewel." Even if the church were to be rebuilt, it would not be the same as it was, he said, calling for the whole area damaged by the bomb to be put right. Barbara Newman, chairman of the committee, said she felt "uneasy" about the proposals.

In their meeting at the Guildhall, the planners also censured English Heritage, who are backing the modern structure, for failing to support adequately the Corporation's attempts at conservation. The meeting heard that the London diocesan secretary, Chris Smith, had accused "the City's planning

officers of writing a report containing "many errors of omission, fact and judgment", and of "bias, inaccuracy and incompleteness". He said the objections by officers on historical grounds were "as illogical and emotive as objections by amenity societies such as the Ancient Monument Society".

In his letter, sent to the chairman but copied to every other member of the committee, Mr Smith said: "The Church has a different agenda from the temporal world. The destruction caused by the IRA was an extreme example of sin, which all of us commit daily."

Strongly defending the modern scheme, he said: "The detractors of this design imply that we are destroying the heritage of the City. They forget that the IRA did that."

Planning officer Peter Rees said he had received 32 letters objecting to the modern scheme, compared to 27 in support.

Conservationists headed by the Friends of St Ethelburga will now press the Bishop of London, the Right Rev Richard Chartres, to give his backing to their alternative plan. They want to rebuild all the main features of the original church, including the popular walled garden, to provide "a valuable ecclesiastical and meeting space" in the City.

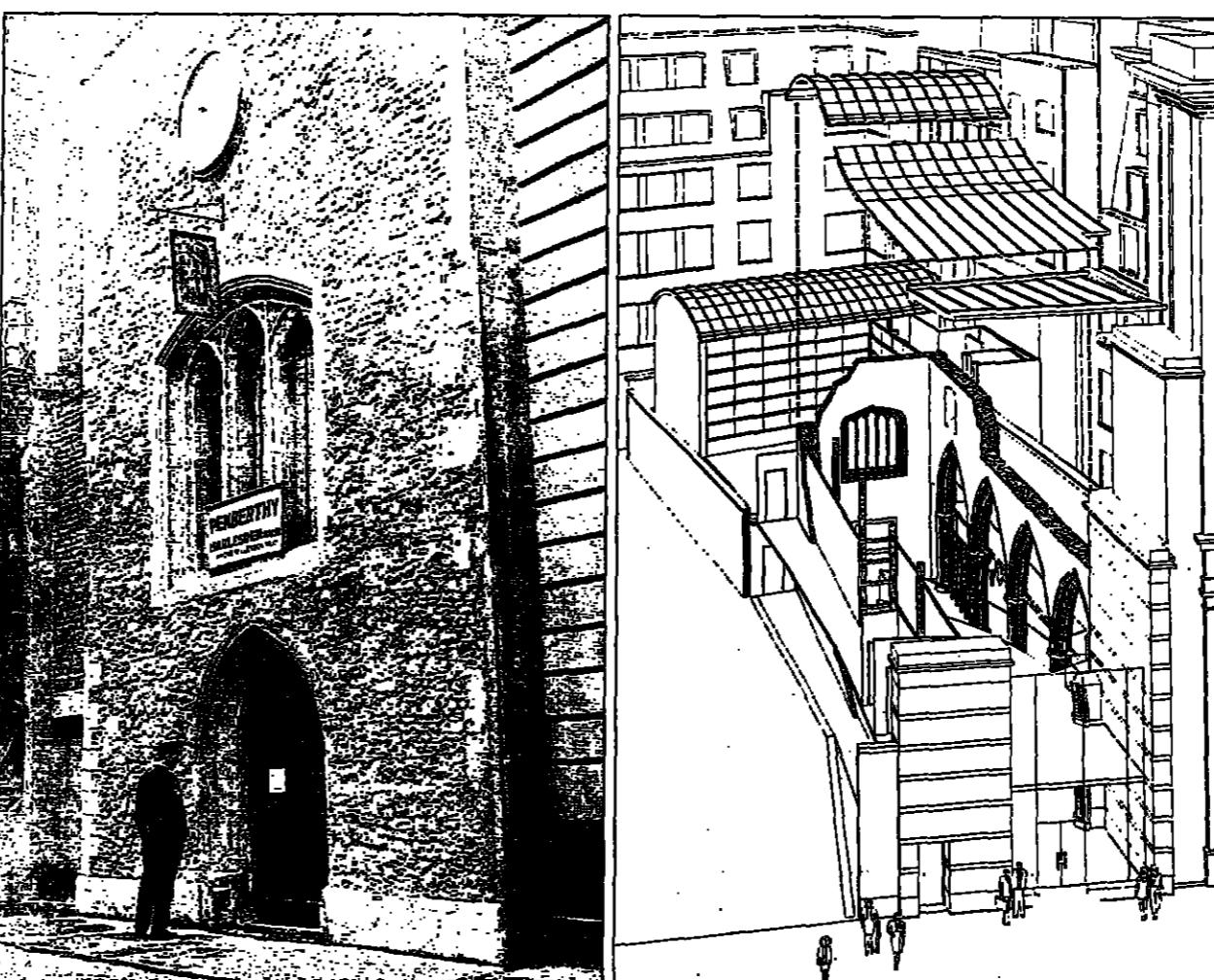
The plan, by architects Rothermel Thomas, involves reusing as much of the ancient timber and masonry as possible and has already won approval from the Corporation of London planning committee. However, it is strongly opposed by senior officials in the London diocese.

Bishop Chartres will decide whether to endorse the rebuilding scheme or whether to appeal against the decision of the planning committee when he meets in council with his senior diocesan officials next week.

Leading article, page 19



The damage caused by the IRA Bishopsgate bomb, above. Conservationists want St Ethelburga's restored as it was, below left, after City planners threw out the scheme put by the Bishop of London's council, below right



Cyanide thieves 'thought it was gold'

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

DETECTIVES investigating the theft of 25 kilograms of cyanide from Heathrow believe the thieves were deceived by packaging describing it as "gold potassium cyanide".

The substance, which can quickly kill if inhaled or swallowed, arrived in three barrels marked "poison" from Paris on scheduled flight BA305 on June 4 and was collected two days later by a security firm from the British Airways cargo terminal.

About 350 containers of the cyanide were missing when the much bigger consignment from which it was taken was delivered to the importers in Gloucestershire. Police were called in by Englehard Clai in Cinderford, a company dealing with precious metals. The alert was raised once checks were made by the company to confirm that the full consignment had been shipped.

Detectives said that there appeared to be no terrorist involvement in the theft. Detective Inspector Alan Garrod, who is leading the inquiry, said: "We believe they may have concentrated on the word 'gold' and ignored the 'potassium cyanide'. What they possess is a lethal chemical compound." He appealed for the thieves to tell police where the cyanide could be found.

He was confident the chemicals were been stolen from Heathrow but said that the police had also alerted Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris as a precaution.

The cyanide, which is used in gold plating, is white and sugar-like in appearance and was in small white circular containers with white labels similar to those used for storing aspirin, a Scotland Yard spokeswoman said. "Do not under any circumstances open the containers. The cyanide is lethal if inhaled or swallowed. If it comes into contact with your skin, wash with soap and warm water immediately. If in doubt, contact your doctor."

The labels on the containers describe the contents in some detail. A BA spokesman said the cargo had been carried under strict regulations and was signed for by the security company collecting it.

Luck runs out for Irish lottery vendors

BY AUDREY MAGEE

THE Irish Government will take shopkeepers to court to stop them selling British National Lottery tickets. Government sources said court cases would be filed against offenders following advice from the Attorney-General that the sale or distribution of the tickets was illegal under the 1956 Gaming and Lotteries Act.

It is estimated that people in the Republic are spending about £20 million a year on the British lottery. In the past, much of this money had been spent on the Irish National Lottery and other charity lotteries.

The odds against winning the British lottery are much greater but the prize money is more than ten times that offered in Ireland. The Irish National Lottery Fund rarely exceeds £3 million, compared with National lottery jackpots of up to £40 million.

About 1,500 outlets sell British lottery slips. Couriers make weekly trips across the border to Northern Ireland where the slips are registered. Customers in the Republic pay £1.25 to play the British lottery: £1 for the ticket, 15p for the shopkeeper and 10p for the courier.

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Greenwich may join Britain's heritage sites

BY JOHN YOUNG

THE historic centre of Greenwich, which includes the Royal Naval College, the National Maritime Museum, the Queen's House, the Royal Observatory and the Cutty Sark, will be nominated next month as England's eleventh World Heritage Site.

Its status is expected to be confirmed in January 1998, less than two years before the completion of the planned regeneration of the Greenwich riverside to celebrate the millennium.

Although the nomination to the World Heritage Fund will be submitted formally by the National Heritage Department, the details have been prepared by English Heritage in co-operation with the International Committee on Monuments and Sites.

Yesterday Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, called for a new crusade to gain greater support and recognition for the ten existing sites in England, some of which, he said, were in poor condition, short of funds and under threat from development and road plans.

Sir Jocelyn, who has campaigned against the widening of the A303 past Stonehenge, returned to the fray earlier this week when he described the surroundings of the Tower of London, another World Heritage Site, as a disgrace. Yesterday he pointed out that the ten sites between them attracted 13 million visitors a year, more than half of them from overseas.

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BY DALYA ALBERGE

ARTS CORRESPONDENT

THE American property millionaire who is giving his £75 million collection of gold and silver objects to the nation said yesterday: "I feel it should come back to its roots and that the English people would really appreciate it."

Arthur Gilbert, who was born 82 years ago in London and has lived in America for the past 47 years, said that many of the treasures in his collection had been sold by the owners of some of Britain's grandest stately houses, including Althorp and Powderham Castle, but they now belonged in Britain.

Mr Gilbert, who made his fortune from industrial development and high-rise office blocks in California, had managed to acquire the objects because British public collections were unable to raise the money and prevent their export.

"At first I was going to give it to the people of California," he recalled. "But I believe that the people here are capable of really showing their appreciation and warmth for this collection. When you see it, you are really going to see something you have not seen before."

American museums had tried to persuade him to leave them the collection, which had been on display for many years at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The pieces include gold snuffboxes made for Frederick the Great of Prussia, one of which cost Mr Gilbert about £1.2 million in 1993, and a silver bowl from Althorp, family home of the Princess of Wales. He said that ultimately

he had been persuaded by his old friend, Lord Rothschild, chairman of the Heritage Lottery Fund, to choose Britain.

Mr Gilbert was speaking at a news conference at Somerset House, where the collection will be housed in vaults to be refurbished with a £15.55 million grant from the lottery fund.

Lord Rothschild said that

the Van Gogh and Gauguins left by Samuel Courtauld and displayed at Somerset House made up one of the greatest collections of paintings given to Britain. Arthur Gilbert, he added, had donated the greatest collection of decorative arts ever given to this country.

Mr Gilbert, whose father built up a furrier company, was born in Golders Green, north London. His parents

arrived in Britain from Poland and Russia in 1893. Before moving to Los Angeles in 1949 Mr Gilbert built up a business making and exporting dinner and evening wear designed by his wife Rosalinde. She died last August. They had been married for 61 years.

"I always love England," Mr Gilbert said. "I only left for selfish reasons because I wanted to live in the sun."

With the success of his Beverly Hills business, Gilbert Financial Corporation, the couple turned their attention to objects d'art, building up one of the most celebrated private collections of gold and silverware in the world.

The gift to the nation includes Roman ornaments from the 18th and 19th centuries covered in tiny pieces of mosaic which Mr Gilbert calls "micro-mosaics". He discovered they were a largely overlooked area and set about becoming one of the world's leading authorities on them. His collection is rivalled only by that of the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg.

It is hoped that the new Somerset House galleries for the collection will be ready for the millennium. The building has long housed the Inland Revenue and the Royal Court of Justice, along with other government departments. Lord Rothschild said that cars would be removed from the great quadrangle, opening up the space to the public again.

Part of the Gilbert collection will be on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum in November to coincide with the opening of the museum's silver galleries.

Leading article, page 17



Top: silver ewer and basin by H. Auguste, c 1789

Above: two gold cups, made in 1665 and 1742



Mr Gilbert speaking yesterday at Somerset House, the future home of his collection

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Indians and Pakistanis the 'new Jews' of Britain

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

INDIANS and Pakistanis are becoming the "new Jews" of Britain, enjoying rising prosperity through hard work while retaining a strong belief in the family, according to a study of census returns.

It says the two communities will emulate the upward mobility of the Jewish community, with growing numbers starting their own businesses, moving into their own homes and joining the ranks of professionally qualified white collar workers.

Meanwhile, the Bangladeshi and black Caribbean communities face an "Irish" future as working-class wage-earners living in council or housing association property.

The "white collar, blue collar" divide emerging within the ethnic minority community is highlighted by Professor Ceri Peach of Oxford University in a detailed analysis of the 1991 census, in which a question on race was included for the first time.

He says: "One of the most telling summaries of the differences between the Caribbean and Asian settlements in Britain is that the Caribbeans faced what I term an 'Irish future' while the Asians faced a 'Jewish future'.

The implication of the

RACIAL MIX

Ethnic Group	Great Britain %
White	51,873,794 94.51
Black Caribbean	499,964 0.91
Black African	212,362 0.39
Black other	178,401 0.33
Indian	840,255 1.53
Pakistani	476,555 0.87
Bangladeshi	182,895 0.30
Chinese	156,938 0.29
Other — Asian	197,534 0.36
Other	280,206 0.53
Total minorities	3,015,050 5.49

Figures are for 1991

housing. While members of the Asian ethnic minority marry predominantly within their own communities, the study found high levels of mixed black Caribbean-white relationships. There was a white partner in 10.1 per cent of households headed by a black Caribbean male; only 4.3 per cent of households featured a white partner where the roles were reversed. "A significant proportion of the ethnic minority population is derived from mixed unions and new ethnic identities are being forged."

Professor Peach says the census indicates that the black Caribbean population in Britain is not as segregated as in America and that it has not become ghettoised, particularly in London where members of the community were moving from the inner city to the suburbs.

The census also discloses the emergence of a black British identity among people who are from an ethnic minority community but are British-born. The figures show that since 1984, a majority of the Caribbean ethnic population has been born in Britain.

The report, *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census*, published yesterday by the Office for National Statistics, estimates the Irish-born population in Britain at between 837,464 and 1,089,428.

MPs protest at conditions for British peacekeepers in Bosnia

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

MANY British soldiers serving in Bosnia are enduring worse conditions than some of their NATO counterparts.

They have inadequate winter clothing, live in tents and have no easy means of phoning home, MPs reported yesterday. The Americans and Dutch enjoyed much better conditions, the all-party Commons Defence Committee said.

Although one MP said he did not expect British soldiers to be living in five-star hotels, after nearly four years of British peacekeeping deployments in Bosnia it was time they had better facilities, the MPs said.

Improved conditions were even more important if, as the MPs urged, British troops remained in Bosnia beyond the 12-month timetable laid down by the Dayton peace accord.

At present, the 10,500 British troops, part of the Nato-led Implementation Force (Ifor), are due to be withdrawn or to start withdrawing from December 20, Bruce George, Labour MP for Walsall South, said if for left after 12 months, it would be "disastrous" because the former warring parties would return to fighting. The MPs, who made their

fourth trip to Bosnia in April, were shocked by the conditions some of the troops had to tolerate, although they admitted that morale was still high. They found one 230-man unit camping in a disused factory. In January they had to survive Arctic conditions of minus 25C.

"We were told that lavatory facilities were so inadequate that troops wait until they leave camp on patrol and then make use of appropriate cover in a mine-infested country," said the MP. "At the time of the MPs' visit, some 2,000 soldiers did not have access to phones, other than via a 30-minute bus ride once a week to a town with a single international phone.

The MPs discovered that while the Americans shipped air-conditioned mobile operating theatres around to treat injured soldiers, the British wounded had to be operated on in tents with no air-filtering system.

There was also a shortage of surgeons. The report said the number of deployable Army surgeons had dropped from 33 to 22 in the past two years. "The Army needs nine medical officers and four surgeons in Bosnia and is having to rely



George said pull-out would be disastrous

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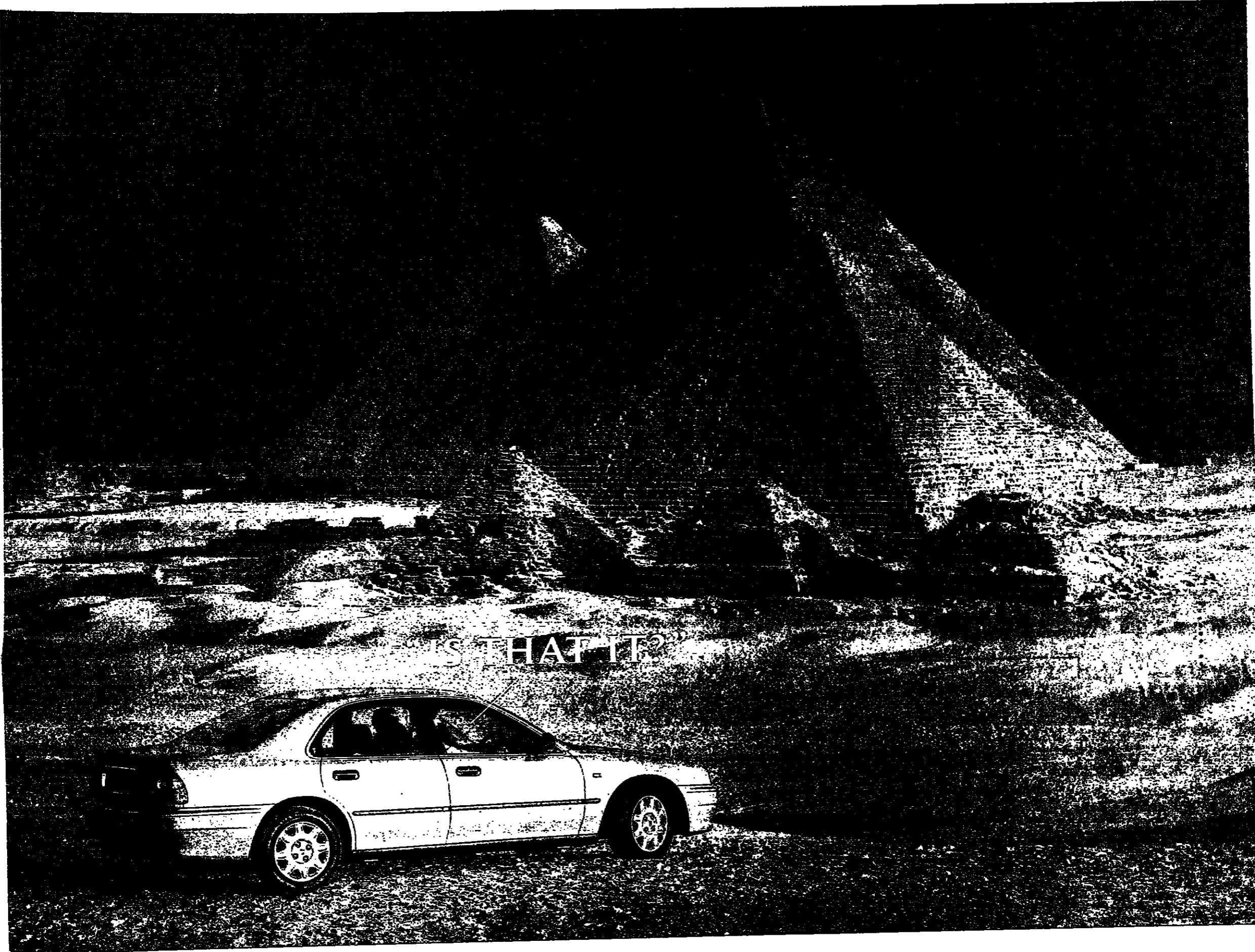
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Spotlight on Aznar in opera drama

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN MADRID

A MELODRAMA is being played out at Madrid's opera house, shut since 1987 for refurbishment. The plot involves a damsel in distress, a menacing minister and a tenor in shining armour.

The argument at the Teatro Real concerns the decision of the Spanish Government to dispense abruptly with the services of Elena Salgado, the theatre's director.

Senora Salgado was appointed by the previous Socialist Government, but Esperanza Aguirre, the Minister for Culture in the new conservative Government, has made clear that she would like a less Socialist figure at the helm of the opera house.

Ministry of Culture officials have been leaning on the director to resign, but she is putting up a fight. The opera house is due to reopen next year after a decade of renovations and Senora Salgado is determined to be in her post when the ribbons are cut and music returns.

She has appealed to Plácido Domingo, the renowned tenor, to intercede on her behalf with José María Aznar, the Prime Minister. Domingo, who will play the title role in Wagner's *Parsifal* on the reopening night, has promised to "try his best". Perhaps appropriately the noble *Parsifal* represents a woman in an unpleasant fate.

However, the Ministry of Culture is insisting that Senora Salgado vacate her office before the week is over "or face the consequences".



Salgado: under pressure

British visa delay angers Euro 96 fans from Russia

BY RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW
AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

AS THE Russian team lost its first game in Euro 96 yesterday, a war of words broke out between London and Moscow over allegations that Britain had refused to grant visas to scores of fans wanting to watch their team.

British officials denied Russian complaints of delay, harassment and rudeness to fans seeking visas and expressed bewilderment at threats of tit-for-tat go-slow action in processing British visa applications. However, Russian officials strongly supported complaints in Moscow that Britain had left dozens of people stranded, unable to make it in time for the Russia-Italy match last night.

Although the British Embassy said yesterday that "only a handful" of applicants had been rejected among more than 1,000 who had applied to watch Russia play, the real figure appeared to be much higher. Info Bank Sport Marketing, the travel agent approved by the Russian Football Union, said that, of the 600 people who paid an average £1,600 each to go to Britain, about 70 had been rejected and lost their money.

"We have tried to do everything that we can to ensure that every applicant is dealt with as quickly as possible," he said. "But people have to use common sense and put their visas in on time." He said the embassy had a duty to ensure that those applying for visas really were football supporters, but denied that anyone had been asked detailed questions about football.

The Russians said last week that, unless the issue was resolved, they would start copying British tactics. That threat has apparently been put into practice. One teacher, who received a visa only at the last minute, said her group was told by Russian consular officials that only seven visas would be issued on Monday, because that was the number issued by the British Embassy in Moscow.

"The visa officers were negative and hostile. Some customers were told straight to their faces that they had forged documents, that their money was stolen or that they were lying. One person was asked the shoe size of a famous Russian footballer," she said.

"One of the disappointed



Firemen and police pass the children to safety from the kindergarten



The critically injured man is taken to hospital after being shot

Suitcase bomber shot as teacher saves children

FROM REUTER IN MINSK

A KINDERGARTEN teacher slipped 15 children to safety through a lavatory window yesterday after they were held hostage by a man carrying a suitcase of explosives in Minsk. Soon after, he was shot and critically wounded by police.

"The man was hit by a sharpshooter and has a single wound," said Sergei Khripach, an Interior Ministry spokesman. "He is in very serious condition in hospital. He is barely alive."

Larisa Sokolova, one of two teachers taken hostage, said later that the man, identified as Alexander Zyulov, who

was born in 1953, entered a classroom in the capital of the former Soviet republic of Belorussia. For more than three hours he told the children periodically to lie on the floor. She tried to keep him calm as his hands frequently trembled.

She was allowed to take the children to the lavatory and slipped them through a window and down a ladder. She then heard gunshots and returned to find the man lying on the floor.

He had apparently been protesting against a court decision to send him for psychiatric treatment.

Foreign Office mocks City envoys

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

CALLS by Labour for prominent business to be drafted into the Foreign Office to head embassies in fast-growing Asian countries have been ridiculed by former ambassadors, and are likely to run into strong resistance in Whitehall.

The Foreign Office, anxious not to be drawn into comment on a party political matter, would not speculate on the proposals put forward by Rob Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary. Serving ambassadors also declined to comment. However, retired heads

of mission, criticised the proposals as impractical and ill-conceived.

Two main objections were immediately put forward.

First, British exporters want a

general overview of affairs in

the country where they want

to do business, rather than

simply a narrow look at

business opportunities. Sec-

ondly, neither the host country

nor British competitors of

the firm for which a businessman

worked before being made

ambassador would ever

believe he was acting fairly

and impartially. "The propos-

al is the wrong way round,"

said Sir Nicholas Henderson.

around drinking too much

and ought to be shaken up.

Every three years or so there's

a new idea for shaking up the service."

Another former ambassador said that a diplomat needed to have a broad knowledge of conditions in a country. This is what the visiting head of a big British company needed to know: the details of trade fairs or export opportunities should be left to commercial sections.

The last big shake-up of the Foreign Office was undertaken by the Central Policy Review Staff in 1977, under a Labour Government.

Kohl's party agrees longer shop hours

Berlin: Germany's governing

party agreed yesterday to al-

low stores to stay open longer

in the hopes of boosting em-

ployment and stimulating the

sluggish economy.

The long-debated change

would allow stores to stay

open until 8pm during the

week and until 4pm on Satur-

days. The compromise would

also lift a prewar law that

forbids bakeries from baking

bread on Sundays. Currently,

most stores are required to

close by 6.30pm on weekdays

and 2pm on Saturdays. (AP)

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There's a great deal going on

Yeltsin conjures up fear of Soviet past in massacre town

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT Yeltsin played a trump card against his main Communist rival in the presidential race yesterday when he raised the spectre of Soviet repression by visiting the scene of one of the bloodiest chapters in modern Russian history.

With only three days left of campaigning ahead of Sunday's polls, he threw Gennadi Zyuganov, his Communist rival, on the defensive when he made a pilgrimage to the southern town of Novocherkassk. The town, a centre for the Don Cossack community, was the site of a massacre in the summer of 1962 when Soviet troops killed scores of civilians during food riots.

"There is no, and never will be a return to the past," said Mr Yeltsin, who solemnly laid a wreath on the simple stone memorial to the dead.

Although details of the massacre were kept secret until the late 1980s, it has now been established that at least 70 people were killed. According

to Geoffrey Hosking's authoritative *History of the Soviet Union*, the unrest was precipitated by government price increases for milk and meat. In Novocherkassk, the rise coincided with moves at a factory to reduce pay. Workers revolted and when police came to arrest the ringleaders, a city-wide strike was observed.

Special KGB troops guarding the local Communist Party building fired shots in the air to disperse the demonstrators. In the ensuing riot, scores of unarmed civilians were shot down as the authorities struggled to restore order.

The memories of the Soviet era repression remain vivid for the Cossacks, the Tsar's fierce frontiersmen, whose communities had already been purged by the Bolsheviks. Yesterday, hundreds of Cossacks pledged their support for President Yeltsin and presented him with a cavalry sabre, which they urged him to use "to cut off the heads of your enemies".

Russian troops start phased withdrawal from Chechnya

BY THOMAS DE WAAL

THE first Russian division began to pull out of the mountains of Chechnya yesterday in line with the peace deal signed on Monday.

The pact crowns a series of efforts by President Yeltsin to solve the 18-month conflict, one of the biggest obstacles to his being re-elected in presidential elections on Sunday.

The first soldiers to leave were from the 24th Motorised Division, stationed in the Shatoi region in southern Chechnya, which suffered almost 100 casualties in an ambush in April. Under the accord, all but two Russian brigades should have left by

the end of August, and the Chechen rebels have agreed to hand in their weapons. The fragility of the accord was revealed, however, when a column of cars carrying members of a rebel delegation, negotiators from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and reporters, was twice attacked near the Chechen capital, Grozny, as it travelled back from the talks in the neighbouring region of Ingushetia. Several explosions rocked the convoy, at least six people were hurt and a window was smashed in the car of Tim Guldmann, the head of the OSCE mission in Grozny.

The accord appears to have been signed in haste before the presidential election and avoids several issues, particularly the rebels' demands for full secession. The rapid timetable for the pullout of troops suggests war-weariness on the Russian side.

Borodino is a stark contrast to the prosperity of Moscow, 75 miles away.

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL
IN BORODINO

The smoke of conflict hangs over the hills in this print of the Battle of Borodino in September 1812 during Napoleon's invasion of Russia

Communists win battle of Borodino

FROM THOMAS DE WAAL

THE plain white obelisks and golden eagles dotted across the fields at Borodino bear witness to the great battle in which Napoleon's army suffered huge losses on its march towards Moscow.

In the village of Borodino today the Communists have already won the battle against President Yeltsin. The question for them is whether they can galvanise enough votes and storm Moscow.

Despite all predictions to the contrary, it may still be possible. Opinion polls are putting President Yeltsin more than ten percentage points ahead of Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader. But pollsters are saying that they may have failed to record a rich seam of hatred for Mr Yeltsin among pensioners and the 30 million rural voters. "We just do not penetrate to some layers of our society," Leonid Sedov, a leading opinion pollster, said recently.

Borodino is a stark contrast to the prosperity of Moscow, 75 miles away. There are few cars, people are shabbily dressed and the roads are not properly covered with asphalt.

Father Igor Vostrikov, an energetic young priest, looks after 20 parishes and churches in the area, including the dove-blue domes of a 17th-century church that is the only building surviving from the era of the battle.

His parishioners, he said, were the losers from five years of post-Communist reforms. Since the collective farm closed two years ago, the old people have almost nothing to live on and most of the young have left to look for work. With a few exceptions — some people who were thankful to Mr Yeltsin for opening the churches — they were going to vote for Mr Zyuganov.

"I think that, if the elections are honest, the Communists will win," Father Igor said. "And judging by the provinces, they are going to vote en masse."

Nadezhda Mikhailova, a local woman dressed in a mauve kerchief and ragged slippers, was collecting water in two buckets from the village pump. She said she was 51 but looked

much older. The £20 a month she earned working at the Borodino Museum was barely enough to keep the family in bread, she said. "I want Zyuganov, and so does my husband and my mother," she said.

In Valuyevka, the next village, the cowshed had lost its roof and the only vehicle on the main street was the wreck of a bus. Vasili and Nikolai, brothers-in-law sitting chatting on a

bench, were Zyuganov voters. "It is disgusting," Vasili said of the Yeltsin campaign. A veteran of the siege of Leningrad, he was an admirer of Margaret Thatcher and said Russia needed a "man of iron".

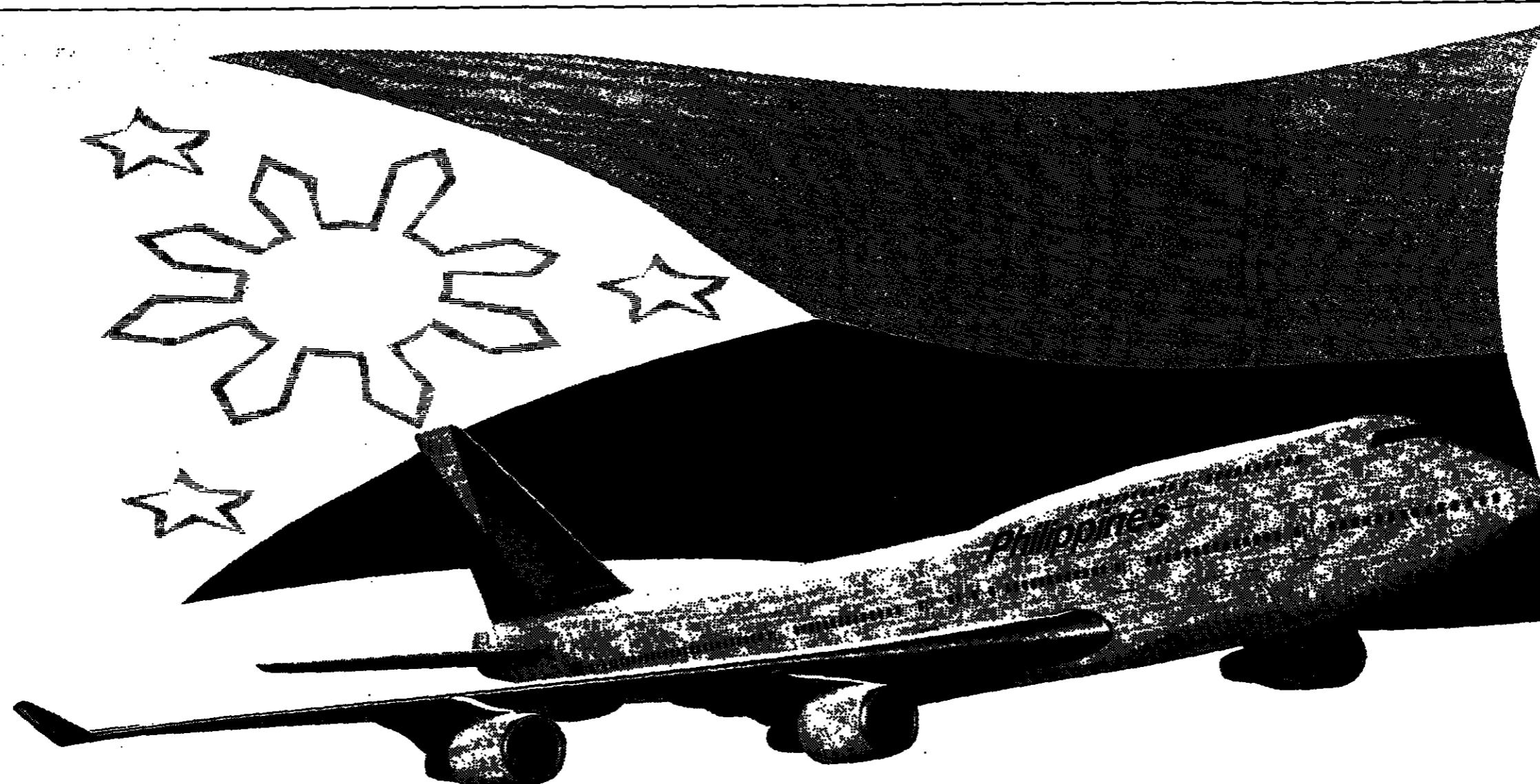
Nikolai got out another Belomorkanal, an old Soviet paper cigarette. His shoes were done up with wire. "Everything has been destroyed here," he said. "Go and look at the cowshed. You cannot live here without a cow."

If the Communists receive less than overwhelming support in the villages, it may be due to oversight rather than lack of support. In the old days people waited for instructions on how to vote from Communist agitators, but none had been to Valuyevka. "Of course we will vote, but we do not know how yet," Nina Sergeyeva said, standing in her yard peeling potatoes into a bucket. "There should be some kind of meeting, some kind of lecture, but people do not understand what to do."

If Mr Yeltsin wins a few votes here, it will be thanks to a dynamic election campaign that succeeded in eclipsing Mr Zyuganov from the television screens.



Zyuganov: gaining rural votes



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Jackson sued after denying sex attack

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN NEW YORK

LEGAL problems have hit Michael Jackson again. The pop singer has been sued in a multimillion-dollar action by the father of a boy he is alleged to have molested in 1993.

The case was settled out of court with a settlement said to be worth \$15 million (£9.8 million) to the 13-year-old. The child's father is now claiming that the settlement included a confidentiality agreement that Jackson may have broken with comments he made on a network television programme last year.

Jackson told an interviewer that the molestation charges were "lies, lies, lies". He added: "There is not one iota of information that was found that could connect me."

The case papers were lodged last month in a Santa Barbara court. The action names as defendants not only Jackson but also Lisa Marie, his estranged wife, Diane Sawyer, the presenter of the chat show, and others associated with the programme. They were "unjustly enriched" by the statements, the plaintiffs claim.

The court papers stated that Jackson "developed, orchestrated, participated and carried out a scheme to accuse falsely the minor of lying about his claims that he was sexually assaulted and molested".

Jackson said: "The allegations made in the lawsuit are false and I will vigorously challenge them."



Jackson: lawsuit claims confidentiality breach

Canada fury after Juppé talks of Quebec 'resistance'

BY QUENTIN LETTS

ALAIN JUPPÉ, the French Prime Minister, angered federalists during a visit to Canada when he appeared to compare the French-speaking separatists of Quebec to resistance fighters in the Second World War.

M Juppé hailed what he called "the spirit of resistance" of French-speaking Canadians.

At a ceremony with Lucien Bouchard, the separatist Premier of Quebec, M Juppé said: "Quebecers do not take the easy way out, because they know the great lesson of history: the spirit of peoples is never better forged than in resistance." In French, the word has rich evocations of the *maquis* who fought the Nazi occupation in the 1940s.

Keith Henderson, leader of the mainly English-speaking Equality Party which opposes Quebec independence, said yesterday that the remarks were totally inappropriate. He said: "It fills me with disgust that a French politician can hark back to the Resistance when Canadian soldiers gave their lives to liberate France from Nazi domination."

Howard Galperin, a Montreal businessman who on Sunday led a rally of 7,000 Quebec federalists on Parlia-

ment Hill in Ottawa, said: "What are the French-speakers meant to be resisting? Not only are their rights guaranteed, they are also restricting the freedoms of English-speaking people." Referring to M Juppé, he said: "This guy is an idiot. His remarks are an insult to people who fought for democracy and freedom."

At the start of his three-day Canadian tour, during meetings with Jean Chrétien, the Canadian Prime Minister, M Juppé avoided all mention of Quebec sovereignty. At Monday night's meeting in Quebec, however, he told a mainly French-speaking audience: "Whatever destiny you choose, France will be at your side."

Last autumn, separatists narrowly lost a referendum on the future of Quebec, the second such result in recent years. Mr Bouchard and his allies, who view independence as inevitable, have said that they intend to push for a third referendum. Mr Bouchard said that M Juppé was following the "legacy" of the late President de Gaulle who in 1967 uttered the cry "Vive le Québec libre!" in support of separation. M Juppé, while taking note of the convention that sovereign states do not interfere with one another's affairs, saluted de Gaulle's

best to be ill-judged.

Graffitists have appeared in Montreal which suggest that some hardliners on both sides may be considering taking up arms, and a widely publicised paper by Robert Lecker, a McGill University professor, recently predicted that Montreal, which retains a large non-French-speaking population, may go the way of Belfast if community tensions are not eased. In such circumstances, the use of "Resistance" looks at best to be ill-judged.

remark

by speaking of his

"unique poetry and ardour" in relation to Quebec.

M Juppé's resistance remarks, even if they were not meant to evoke the *maquis*, appear ill-chosen, given the fact that French-speakers exercise great power in Quebec and have been accused of bullying non-separatist groups, including Jewish people and "ethnics" whom they partly blamed for last autumn's referendum result.

A recent poll of English-speaking Quebecers suggested that only half of them expected to be living there in five years' time.

The interpretation of M Juppé's words as a reference to the wartime Resistance is also unfortunate, given the fears of violence in Quebec between federalists and separatists.

Pat Buchanan, who will have about 150 delegates, vowed to fight the new formulation, as did the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council. But Mr Dole's move delighted pro-choice Republicans and with the latest poll showing 72 per cent of Americans against banning abortion it made some electoral sense.

Mr Dole, 72, formally resigned at 2pm yesterday, ending 35 years in the House and Senate and a record 11 years as leader of Senate Republicans. All morning senators of both parties delivered tributes before Mr Dole, fighting back tears, delivered his televised farewell.

Avoiding partisan politics, he recalled

with humour and nostalgia the highlights of his career and great figures he had served with, saying: "It's been a great ride."

□ **Whitewater questions** Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater special prosecutor, has broadened his investigation of the White House to include its improper requisitioning of confidential FBI files on about 340 Republicans. Anthony Marcena, the army investigator who requested and processed them in 1993, was questioned on Monday.

The White House has called the affair an innocent bureaucratic error, but Republicans have accused President Clinton's aides of emulating the Nixon White House by seeking damaging information on political enemies.

EYES screwed up against the bright daylight. Siamese twins Shanna and Janelle Roderick left hospital for home after being separated by surgeons in California.

The infants, who were joined at the liver when they were born on May 1, have put on 2lb each since the four-

hour operation on May 30 to separate them and now each weigh 8lb. Fewer than 100 pairs of Siamese twins have survived separation operations, but doctors at the Loma Linda University Medical Centre are confident the Roderick girls will be a rare success.

Travolta stumps off Polanski set after 'titanic clash of egos'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

JOHN TRAVOLTA has piroqued off the French set of his latest film, *The Double*, after a bitter disagreement with Roman Polanski, the volatile director.

Shooting for the £11 million film, in which Travolta was to star alongside Isabelle Adjani, the French actress, and Jean Reno, was scheduled to start at the Boulogne-Billancourt studios on Monday. Yesterday, however, Mr Polanski was desperately seeking a top-name replacement.

The dispute was described as a "difference of views on the script" of the film, which is based on Dostoevsky's novel, and in particular the interpretation of Travolta's character.

The disagreement apparently reached a peak when Travolta, the star of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Pulp Fiction*, demanded that Mr Polanski should be sacked in exchange for his continued participation.

Mr Polanski has been working on the film for a year, and producers insisted that filming had merely been delayed for "a few weeks" while a double was found for Travolta.

Travolta stumps off Polanski set after 'titanic clash of egos'

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

flew back to the United States at the end of last week.

Initially, producers said Travolta had gone home to deal with a medical crisis involving his son, but insiders said the real reason for his abrupt departure was a titanic clash of egos.

Mr Polanski has been working on the film for a year, and producers insisted that filming had merely been delayed for "a few weeks" while a double was found for Travolta.

Abortion rift mars Dole farewell

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

BOB DOLE marred an otherwise glorious Senate departure yesterday by reopening the bitter Republican abortion rift, days after achieving a compromise.

He infuriated social conservatives by saying his proposed "declaration of tolerance" for those with opposing views on moral issues should appear not in the party election manifesto's preamble where it would carry less weight, as his aides had promised, but where the text calls for a constitutional abortion ban.

"It has been resolved, I made that decision. It is not negotiable," the Republican presidential nominee told a television interviewer on Monday night. "If you want to make it clear to people that we are tolerant... it ought to be right up there where people can see it." Exasperated

conservative leaders gave a warning of a damaging public battle at August's Republican convention.

Pat Buchanan, who will have about 150 delegates, vowed to fight the new formulation, as did the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council. But Mr Dole's move delighted pro-choice Republicans and with the latest poll showing 72 per cent of Americans against banning abortion it made some electoral sense.

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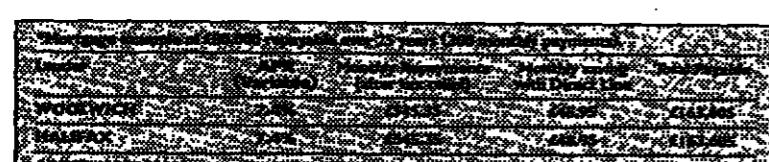
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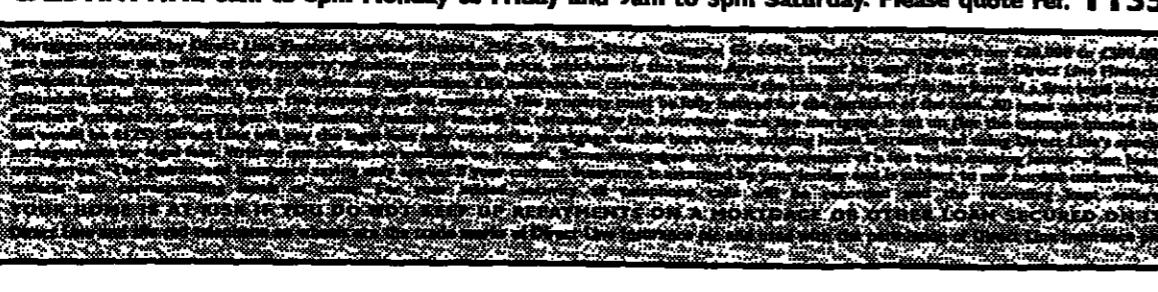
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Bao: writing letter defies instructions

Dissident complains of life 'in a cage'

BY JONATHAN MIRSKY

BAO TONG, who until his recent release from prison was China's highest-ranking political prisoner, has written to senior party and government leaders to complain that his continuing presence "in a cage" is illegal.

Once a central committee member, secretary to the politburo standing committee and chief aid to Zhao Ziyang, who was then party general secretary, Mr Bao was arrested in May 1989, just before the Tiananmen killings, after being charged with disclosing state secrets to the demonstrators. Freed on May 27 after seven years in jail, Mr Bao, 63, was ordered into isolation in a suburb of Peking.

In his letter to 30 leaders, Mr Bao said: "My sentence was fulfilled 15 days ago. But I have been confined to the Western Hills and stripped of my right to go home. In order to protect the law, which I take seriously, I appeal to the party and government leaders to dispute this illegal act."

Referring to his recent detention in Qinching, Mr Bao said: "I have now been thrown into this new pen, where there is no law, no lawyers, no phone, and no 'doctors'. Mr Bao's family says he is ill."

By sending the letter, Mr Bao is defying instructions that he must publish no comments inside or outside the country that could harm China, must see no foreigners and must not leave his quarters.

What the authorities fear is Mr Bao's knowledge of the divisions among Chinese leaders during the Tiananmen demonstrations. Mr Zhao, who was also arrested in May 1989 for being too sympathetic to the demonstrators, favoured a soft line: Deng Xiaoping, the senior leader, and Li Peng, the Prime Minister, favoured the crackdown that crushed the uprising on June 3-4.

□ Kathmandu: A dozen protesters were arrested here yesterday as they demonstrated against China's nuclear test on June 8 and tried to move towards the Chinese Embassy to hand over a letter. (AFP)

Junta trial told of Haile Selassie's last tearful hours

FROM NICHOLAS KOTCHI IN ADDIS ABABA

A SERVANT of the late Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie described yesterday how the imprisoned monarch wept and prayed on the night of August 25, 1975, when he realised he was going to be killed.

"Is it true, Ethiopians, that I have nor strived for you?" the 83-year-old emperor cried out, according to evidence at the trial of former Marxist rulers accused of genocide.

He sprinkled the floor with his tears. He knelt down and wept and started praying," the imperial servant, a prosecution witness, told the court in Addis Ababa. "He understood that it was the end of his days."

The three prosecution witnesses who testified said Haile Selassie was found dead early on August 26 and buried the same day by the Dergue, the military junta headed by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, which overthrew the monarch in September 1974.

The court is trying 71 members of the Dergue, of whom 25, including Colonel Mengistu, are being tried in absentia. They face the death penalty if convicted. The junta was ousted by rebels in 1991

and at least 1,700 of its former officials have been in custody for up to five years waiting to be charged and tried. The presiding judge has forbidden the public identification of witnesses.

At earlier hearings, witnesses have said that the Dergue ordered the summary execution of imperial officials.

Yesterday's first witness, a manservant, told of what he said were two probable assassination attempts on August 25 in Haile Selassie's apartments in the Grand Palace where he was held prisoner.

The first was "an electric device" installed in the emperor's chair. It failed to function. The second was a pill that the emperor refused to swallow.

The second witness, who was looking after the emperor that night, said guards ordered him to leave the adjoining room where he normally slept. Haile Selassie wept when the man told him he would be sleeping alone.

The next morning I knocked on his bedroom door and opened it. There was a sort of odour and his face was totally black," the witness said. The trial was adjourned until tomorrow. (Reuters)

BY JONATHAN MIRSKY

IN HONG KONG

AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

HONG KONG'S school textbooks are to be revised after the colony reverts to Chinese rule next year to reflect Peking's view of history, according to a local publisher.

Taiwan, seen as a rebel province by China, will no longer be described as a "country", and references to the Opium War, when China lost Hong Kong to Britain, will be purged of "Western bias". Rodney Chui, the president of the Hong Kong Education

International Publication Association, said. However, references to China's 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square, particularly details of the death toll, which is disputed, would be left up to individual editors, he added.

"Sometimes it is difficult to separate politics and education," Mr Chui said. "The books are to be rewritten with a more pragmatic point of view." The term "pragmatic" is commonly used here to justify bowing to Chinese demands.

Mr Chui insisted, however, that editorial treatment of the Tiananmen

Square crackdown would not be affected, although the subject is extremely sensitive here.

In June 1994, Dominic Wong, then Hong Kong's Director of Education, observed that because what Peking calls "the incident" had occurred within the past 20 years, it would be best not to mention it in textbooks.

Chris Patten, the Governor, immediately instructed education officials to reconsider the 20-year exclusion rule. Mr Wong claimed he had been misrepresented.

Yesterday Mr Patten said: "History is not going to suddenly change

at midnight on June 30, 1997. What has happened has happened. Students had to learn to distinguish the difference between truth and propaganda".

In a significant underlining of the importance to China of Taiwan and Hong Kong, Lu Ping, the director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, said yesterday that while much in the colony would remain the same after 1997, anyone who advocated the independence of Taiwan or Hong Kong "must really be a lunatic".

□ Escape attempt: Hong Kong security forces fired teargas and threw more than 100 Vietnamese boatpeople into prison after what the Government called an attempted mass escape from one of its detention camps yesterday.

The clashes, which erupted at the High Island detention centre in the New Territories, triggered criticism from a pressure group, Refugee Concern Hong Kong, which condemned the authorities for having detained the refugees "arbitrarily and indefinitely". About 200 masked Vietnamese detainees tried to storm the camp fence before dawn. (Reuters)

Hong Kong to rewrite history with Chinese bias

Netanyahu urged to widen buffer zone in Lebanon

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE prospect of renewed heavy fighting in Lebanon increased yesterday as the right-wing Israeli Prime Minister-elect broke a self-imposed silence and vowed to "take care in our own way" of Iranian-backed Hezbollah guerrillas when he forms a government, probably next week.

Binjamin Netanyahu spoke as the five latest victims of Hezbollah violence, killed in a south Lebanon ambush on Monday, were buried. Israeli army chiefs alleged the attack was in breach of the shaky ceasefire that halted their 17-day blitz on Hezbollah — Operation Grapes of Wrath — in late April.

According to Israel radio, Mr Netanyahu, elected on a

pit Mr Netanyahu, an outspoken critic of the US-brokered ceasefire not only against Beirut but also Syria, the military power in Lebanon, where it has 40,000 occupying troops. This would further dim prospects of a resumption of Israeli-Syrian peace talks, already threatened by Likud's refusal to surrender the Golan Heights, occupied since 1967.

Mr Netanyahu, trying to form a majority coalition in the 120-seat Knesset from the hardline religious and nationalist parties that triumphed in May's poll, has until July 20 to put a team forward for the necessary vote of confidence.

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Japan store in 'gangster' scandal

FROM AGENCIE FRANCE-PRESSE IN TOKYO

THE president of a top Japanese chain of department stores has resigned over a scandal involving payments to gangsters to prevent disruption at meetings of shareholders.

"I have made a decision to resign as president. As a manager, I feel a deep responsibility for this case," Hiroshi Hidaka, 72, said yesterday in Osaka, base of the Takashimaya chain and the country's oldest department store.

Police arrested one former and two present executives of the company on Saturday for allegedly paying 80 million yen (£52,000) to gangsters to prevent racketeers from embarrassing the company's management at its shareholders' meeting in May last year. The payments to gangsters are suspected to total £80 million over a ten-year period, according to widespread news reports.

His resignation came the same day as the Osaka prefecture suspended Takashimaya from local government tenders for a year. Takashimaya was suspended from Tokyo metropolitan government tenders for two months in April after allegations of bid rigging with other stores.

Japan's commercial code was tightened in 1982 to crack down on racketeers who buy a small parcel of shares in companies with the sole purpose of extorting money

by threatening to disrupt shareholder meetings, known as *sokai*. But such racketeers, known as *sokaiya*, have survived as some big companies continue offering payments to maintain the peace.

In 1992, an auditor and two executives at the leading supermarket chain Ito-Yokado were charged with paying 27 million yen to *sokaiya*. The company's founder and owner, Masatoshi Ito, stepped down as president.

Takashimaya, established in 1919, is a prestigious chain of 18 department stores with sales totalling 88 billion yen in the business year to February. The company, which traces its roots to a Kyoto-based clothing retailer set up in 1831, has subsidiaries and affiliates in Australia, Britain, France, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

Australians drink a toast to elixir of life

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

DRINKERS in the land of the amber nectar were raising their glasses last night to a new study that claims beer has medicinal qualities.

Not only do men who drink beer live longer, but they are less likely to suffer heart problems, researchers at the University of Western Sydney found. The same applies to women beer drinkers, who were barred from most pubs here until two decades ago.

These conclusions emerged from a study of nearly 3,000 men and women over the age of 60 in the rural town of Dubbo in New South Wales.

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STARTING TODAY: STYLE EDITOR GRACE BRADBERRY TAKES A REGULAR LOOK AT LATEST TRENDS

ADVERTISING ARCHIVES

Bare-legged women are not to be taken seriously

The majority of the women who hold senior positions feel that to arrive at work bare-legged would indicate diminished responsibility. Until recently there would have been no question that they were right. Bare legs were considered slatternly, ungroomed and unhygienic. Privately, some men still feel this, and grimace as they mention the white stubby legs they have seen in their offices.

There are also class distinctions at work. Bare legs are associated with the queues outside down-market nightclubs, the women in nothing but T-shirts, the women in short skirts, stockings and no tights.

Those who dictate style and the chic women who follow their advice have decided that it is now okay to go bare-legged when the temperature hits 80.

But before stuffing crumpled 15 deniers into a suitcase it is worth bearing one simple point in mind: these women don't work in the same offices as you or I. Many of those whose pictures dominate the social diaries of glossy magazines don't work at all.

In the past, hosiery has undoubtedly denoted social status. Going without was "common". Or as Alison Lurie puts it succinctly in *The Language of Clothes*: "In any contemporary gathering, no matter what its occasion, the well-to-do can be observed to have on more clothes."

But just recently, the etiquette code has been eroded. "The tights rule is just not applicable any more," says Ms Armstrong categorically. "Not even at Ascot. Women with really good legs can look smart without tights."

Her case is backed up by the Princess of Wales, who abandoned tights at Ascot when the combina-

tion of heat and pregnancy became too much.

But as more and more "well-bred" women dispense with tights, a new hierarchy is developing. It is the quality of the skin, enhanced by professional waxing and fake tan, that marks out the haves from the have-nots. High-maintenance women have another arena in which to compete.

"Whether you wear tights or not all depends on your legs, not your status," confirms Ms Armstrong. "Mottled flesh and obvious veins would look unsightly. But then most women are so self-critical that they wouldn't bare their legs in that condition anyway."

Yet this iconoclasm remains an irrelevance to the world of working women. When you talk to successful businesswomen, it becomes clear that they always wear tights.

"I've never asked myself the question," says Yve Newbold, former company secretary of the Hanson Group, and now chief executive of a City headhunting firm. "The answer is that if you want to be taken seriously, then I'm sorry, but you have to dress seriously. That means wearing tights. People do notice bare legs, just as they would notice a man wearing shorts."

If you want to be on the "playing field", as she puts it, you have to follow the rules.

There is another dimension. A colleague recalls a line in a secretarial manual which read "bare legs mean sex". This might be going a bit far. Poor legs become an admission of weakness.

"Perhaps if my legs were tanned it might be different," muses Sue Ellen, managing director of United Racecourses. "But I think people would notice if I went to a



Princess of Wales: bare legs

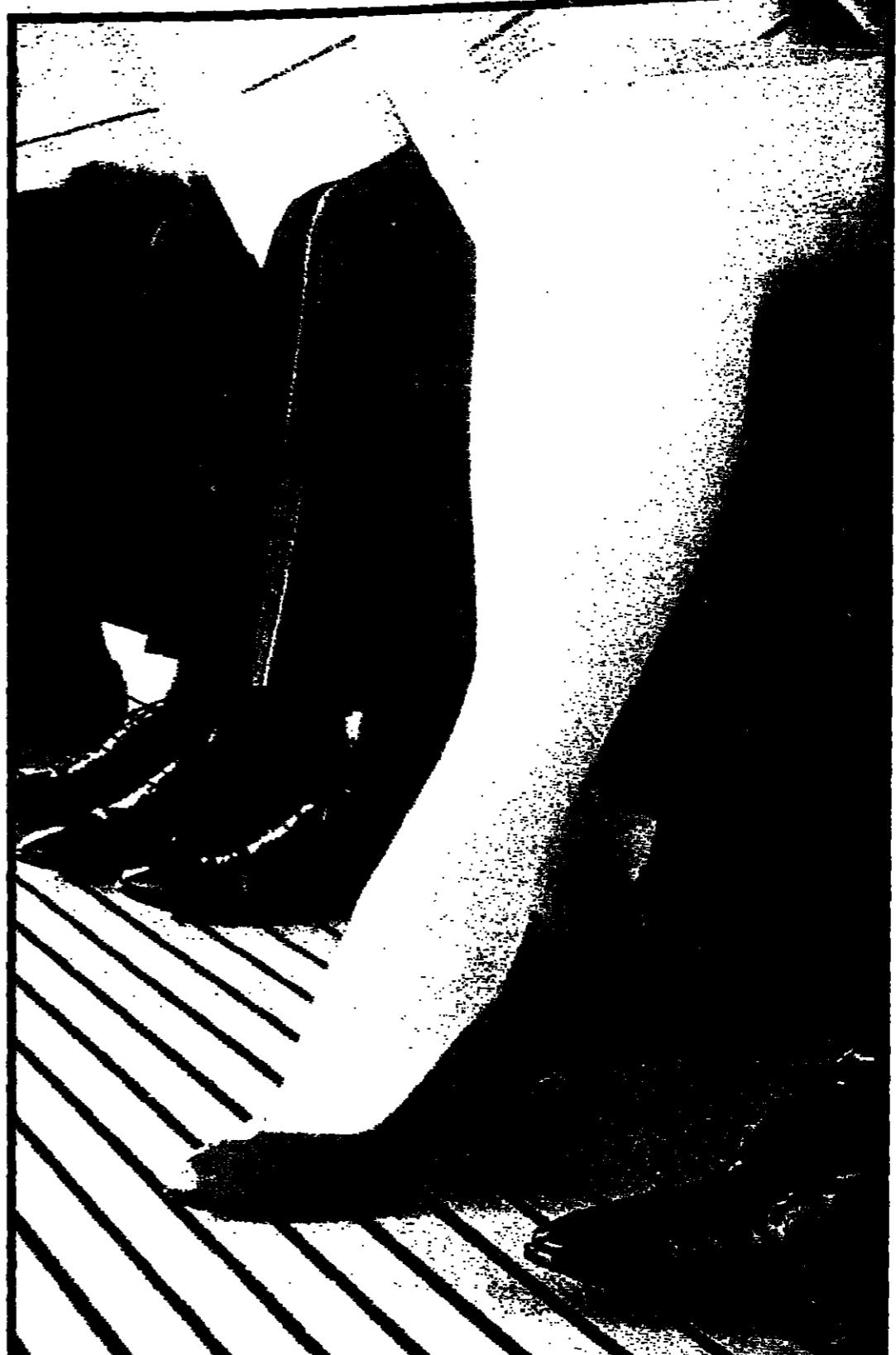
board meeting without tights, and they probably wouldn't like it."

Even radical women cannot shake off the constraints. "I had exactly this dilemma with myself when I left the house this morning," admits Tessa Jowell, Labour MP for Dulwich and Shadow Minister for Women. "In the end I put my tights on. I don't think people at the House would notice — my legs are not that riveting — but it's like wearing make-up. I wouldn't feel properly dressed without."

The dilemma crosses the political divide. "I had to attend a big dinner last night and I so nearly didn't wear tights," says Caroline Waldegrave. "But at the last minute I changed my mind, even though I was wearing a long dress."

Even in the arts world the rule persists, though it is more imaginatively interpreted. "If you look around our office you'll find that most women either wear trousers or long dresses that don't require tights," says Mel Kenyon, a theatrical agent with Casarotto Ramsay.

Ultimately, shedding tights, like burning bras, is not quite the act of liberation it might seem. Women who abandoned underwiring found the gravitational pull of their breasts open to scrutiny. Those who choose to go bare-legged will find themselves competing for a place in a hierarchy dominated by women with more time and money. How much better to maintain an image of high-mindedness, and side-step the beauty contest altogether, restricting the viewing of bare legs to family and friends. Purnah brings a kind of freedom.



Successful businesswomen always wear tights and not to do so indicates a diminished responsibility

Premium cover without excess

Check it out

TINTED MOISTURISERS

TINTED moisturisers were once the poor relation of foundation, providing sparse, streaky coverage that faded quickly. But thanks to more sophisticated gelling agents they are now a real alternative. Make-up artists have picked up on this. On the catwalks this season, Gucci and John Rocha models wore moisturisers rather than foundation, for a smooth, luminous finish. Here we select six of the best. All the products contain SPF5, which help protect the skin against the ultraviolet rays in sunlight.

but needed reapplication by late afternoon. Score 8

• LANCOME *Iman* Mat. £15.0. A new matte version of an existing product, it gave a duller finish than many of the others — a boon in the midday sun. Score 8

• CLARINS Revitalising Tinted Moisturiser, £15.50. Contains an "anti-pollution complex". Creamy, with a light finish. Looked natural

but needed reapplication by late afternoon. Score 8

• ESTEE LAUDER Perfect Climate Sportwear Tint, £17. Claims to neutralise 90 per cent of all free radicals — impossible to test but the results were certainly good. Score 9

• VICHY Lumineuse Tinted Moisturiser, £8.25. Comes in two skin types, and claims to enrich the skin. Gave a luminous finish but felt slightly greasy. Score 6

• COLOURINGS Tinted Moisturiser, £3.75. Excellent value, though the finish was not as smooth as others. It had the highest sun protection factor. Score 6



Tints add a hint of colour

Essence of the fashionable East

Check it out

GROOVY FOOD: CORIANDER

which, considering how easy it is to grow, is a culinary bargain. Dishes such as smothered lamb with coriander and saffron are the teetering pinnacle of cutting-edge cookery.

According to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Information Bureau, coriander has become as popular as parsley, and as it is a labour-intensive crop that has to be picked by hand, it has that cachet of the pampered plant that is so crucial to the jaded foodie.

GILES COREN

first time it has been used as a salad leaf. We serve it with Thai shallots and garlic chicken. What most people don't realise is that one of the main flavours comes from the root. Ideally, you should put the root in curry sauces, then use the leaves with the in-crowd.

A stock ingredient of Thai and Malaysian cooking for centuries, the burgeoning desirability of these cuisines and their influence on Western chefs is seeing coriander explode onto our plates and palates, with its characteristic cool, flowery zing.

At Mezzo, the trendiest of Terence Conran's restaurants, John Torode, the chef, is in raptures. "Coriander may have been around for a long time," he says, "but for this is the last moment to give colour and flavour. It

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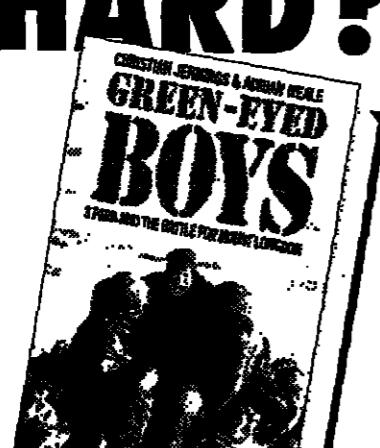
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SO YOU THINK YOU'RE HARD?



THINK AGAIN.

3 PARA AND THE BATTLE FOR MOUNT LONGDON

© HarperCollins Publishers

Show-stealer Stella is still on song

Check it out

PEOPLE: STELLA McCARTNEY

newspapers, and Ms McCartney was inundated with offers to buy her clothes.

"I didn't get back to people as I should have done," she admits. "But I was shell-shocked by the whole thing."

A year on, she has set up on her own, and has run off several hundred garments for a Japanese company. Her next commission is to design a

collection for Thailand. "Kate Moss has modelled some of my new designs," she says. "It was a case of me saying, 'come on Kate, slip this on'. I don't know what I'm going to do with the pictures yet."

While other students chose to go in-house with major designers, she had feelings of "been there, done that". "I worked for Christian Lacroix when I was 15," she says. "And after A levels I worked for Betty Jackson."

As a teenager she met Yves Saint Laurent backstage at one of his Paris fashion shows. "I ought to go to Paris and New York and show my work there. But I'm really very English," she says.



One of Stella McCartney's recent creations



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The moaning male

It is time men stopped being quite so neurotic about how they have lost out in the feminist revolution

FOR A woman to feel preoccupied about her looks is — you'd be forgiven for thinking — to be expected. But for a man to worry about his appearance, well, it's a tragedy.

According to a survey in a men's magazine, an increasing number of men are unhappy about their "body image" in general, and insecure about their lack of hair, muscle or sex appeal in particular. These findings have led to much shaking of the collective male head. Things, you see, have come to a pretty pass: man's confidence, on which rests his very masculinity, is at its lowest ebb yet. Civilisation as we know it is threatened.

Every other week now comes information that apparently signals man's unhappy demise, his fragile state, his dismal lot: women may have it all these days, but it is men who are paying the price; and they are left with a whole lot of nothing.

The silliness of such claims is so obvious, but it hasn't stopped otherwise fairly lucid commentators from making them. It is routine now to hear men described — and what's more, unembarrassed — as an endangered species, fatally wounded in the feminist battle for equality. Jack Nicholson, an iconic male if ever there was one, goes as far as informing the current edition of *The Sainsbury's Magazine* that "in many ways, the world's leading minority right now is the white male". It is a theory many men have taken up with alacrity.

I have, by my side as I write, a copy of the deliciously febrile *Male View* magazine which takes the paranoid view of sexual politics to new heights. I would describe it as hysterical only if it were etymologically correct. But then, testosterone-fuelled alarm is always so much more reasonable, don't you find?

It is a bit unfair to pick on this magazine, since it is so obviously the sounding board of the embittered tendency. There are real grievances here — men who have lost contact with their children after divorce and so forth — but they are aired as general complaints about the lot of man, oppressed, to quote the breath-takingly lip-licking American radio commentator, Rush Limbaugh, by totalitarian femnazis regimes.

More respectfully, this ag-



Magazines are full of tales of man's unhappiness, his dismal lot: they believe that women have it all, but that it is men who are paying the price

grieved stance could be described as the Neil Lyndon view: that feminism has done unutterable damage to men and not helped women, that we keep quiet about men's unhappiness while making political capital out of women's. It is not a view, on the whole, that I share. I don't, for example, believe that men are as often beaten up by women as women are by men and the only difference is that women moan to their doctors but men bravely bear their wounds in silence.

I think that women have had, and do often still have, legitimate grounds for complaint. One must acknowledge historical patterns, historical truths. But at the same time, one must be as honest in noting that some things at some times are considered more acceptable than others. It is now thought to be perfectly OK to badmouth men, to itemise their failings, to undermine their identity, but equal freedom in discussing women is not granted.

I'm not sure I'd see that so much as a dangerous sign of the pendulum swinging too far in the opposite direction (as the alarm goes) but the normally clumsy way things have of shaking down. I don't say it isn't often regrettable, but I think it is time we stopped being quite so anxious about the welfare of the white male in society.

What has really happened is that everyone now whinges a lot more. Times are hard for men, they're hard for women. This is life, not a programmed, gender-sensitive course of destruction. We are too quick to want to see things in this way. I don't know in whose interest it is to depict things in term of men's losing, women's winning — or the other way around. But this constant pitting of the one sex against the other is surely, in real terms, antithetical to the way in which we live, which is together.

Having said that, of course it is true that men's lives have been enormously changed by the very real change in women's lives and expectations. How could it be otherwise? I am someone who feels deeply unnerved by change, so I sympathise with male anxiety here, but just because change is frightening doesn't mean it isn't necessary.

Yes, perhaps it is true that men are less confident than they were, that they feel questioned more and question themselves more — but is this necessarily a bad thing? Who says the position of men

what you were and what you were about. That seems to me to be precisely what education shouldn't be about: learning is about questioning ourselves and others and realising that we cannot be sure, except, increasingly, of what we do not know.

I think much the same of the much-vaunted, now-threatened male confidence. It might be lovely to have it, but is it a sign, really, of strength? I don't say it is good that men now fret about their looks as much as women, although in the first instance it must be remembered that this is a self-selective survey — the sort of men who buy a magazine called *Men's Health* are going to be the type to worry — and in the second, the findings do anyway seem pretty unsurprising. Many men are overweight, going bald, hardly Adonis-like: a degree of modest dissatisfaction with the fact might, rather, be as it should be.

But it is preposterous to argue that men have reached crisis point or that masculinity is endangered. Rather than feeling threatened, say, by women's presence in the workplace, many men feel profoundly relieved that they do not have to be their family's sole support. What might have been

er about the traditional set-up was that everyone's roles were more sharply delineated, but that doesn't mean that the roles themselves were anxiety-free. The pressures on men — to be strong, to provide, to protect and to do all these things without flinching or complaining — were enormous.

What is more, failure was inevitable and I'm not sure it always helped men that women tried, in turn, to protect men from that. I don't think it would be going too far to say that these expectations of men made both men and women unhappy. Men felt inadequate and women felt let down.

Perhaps it is indeed harder for men if they feel they can no longer take their position for granted: they can no longer be prized simply for being men. But what is so wrong in that? It's not the same as saying that masculinity itself should be disparaged.

To question is not to annihilate. Both feminism and backlash-masculism should stop seeing unexamined confidence as the highest good. We are male or female because that's what we are: in neither case should we expect to be congratulated on it.

So who really needs a masterclass?

Learning with a famous writer does work, says Tania Kindersley

At the beginning of May, my publisher called and said that the director of the Hay Festival in Herefordshire wondered if I would like to take part in a masterclass with Peter Carey. It was billed as "a masterclass for young writers recovering from or preparing for the rigours of publishing". I loved that "wondered". It's like saying: "We wondered if you would like to win the lottery."

I had only a vague notion of listening at the feet of a master but on Monday morning Peter started with: "Work in progress: what have you brought?" Panic — I had nothing. Luckily, the others were equally ill-prepared, and after an intensive period of typing and printing and fixing,

he made me see that it is. We broke at five on the second day, ready to rewrite. In true literary tradition, we decided to put off until tomorrow what we could do today, and repaired to drink and chat and listen to a reading.

On the third day we wrote, and on the last two days we read the new work. The results were astonishing. All our pieces had altered dramatically. There was a sense of growing excitement as we saw how the pieces had changed. By the end, we were exhilarated.

On Friday evening we went to hear him read from his own work in progress. Robert McCrum, his editor, other publishing people and Salman Rushdie were there. The reading was extraordinary: everything Peter had offered us was there in his work.

After the reading, the photographers were going nuts, trying to get pictures of Peter and McCrum and Rushdie together. Our little group moved diffidently towards the main action, when Peter suddenly looked away from the crowd around him. "Where are my students?" he said. He turned, saw us and took his manuscript out of its buff envelope and gave it to us. There are certain moments you always carry with you. For me, that was one of them.

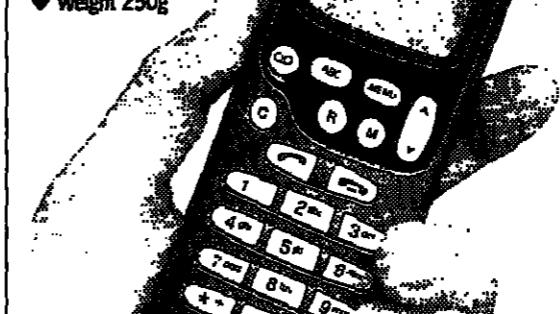
• *Tania Kindersley's third novel, Goodbye, Johnny Thunder, was published by Hodder & Stoughton in May.*

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WHO'S REALLY BEHIND BRITISH BUSINESS TODAY

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1-2-3 JULY 1996
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Alan Coren



■ After all these years in journalism, what have I got to show for myself?

You will have read — since that is precisely what you were intended to do — that next month's *Cosmopolitan* will feature photographs of nude men. Manc nude men. You will also have read that Mandi (sic) Norwood, the magazine's editor, invited the Prime Minister to take part in this enterprise, but that John Major sensibly decided that his part should not be taken anywhere near it.

Is there anything remotely interesting in all this? Yes, there are two things. I shall grapple with the remoter later, but the first is Mandi's reason for doing it which is that it is "an attempt to update the publication for a younger readership". This strikes me as immensely interesting, since *Cosmopolitan* is not some shoestring, whim-driven attic outfit where two men and a dog suck pencils until one of them comes up with an editorial idea, it is owned by the Hearst Corporation, which annually spends a Kane's ransom on rocket salad and Chablis so that serious thinkers in sharp suits may congregate around shiny rosewood tables, on both sides of the Atlantic, to thrash out every last scintilla of marketing policy.

And these we ask, were the people who came to the conclusion that the only editorial feature guaranteed to bring the nation's youth hurling into newsagents was snapshots of naked middle-aged men? How very odd. You and I would have thought, would we not, that this was the one sector of the market where there was no curiosity left to be satisfied, given that it is, these days, immersed in nudity of every kind — not merely in film and television and video and tabloid and magazine and poster, but also in life itself, where, as I understand it, the nation's youth spends most of its time with its kit off.

And, in each of these circumstances, is almost certainly looking at something rather more stimulating, if our great leader will forgive me, than a 53-year-old man from Huntingdonshire, clad only in his socks.

We must now pause, you and I, because we have both reached that dimensional point in this column where, if the head at the top were not decorously collared but stark naked, you might now be imagining what you would be staring at if words weren't there instead. Unsettling, isn't it? But not half as unsettling as it is for the. Because we have also reached the remoter interesting thing about Mandi's landmark project, which is its implication for everyone who toils in the media vineyard, viz, how long will it be before all of us are required to tread the grapes with our trousers off? For *Cosmopolitan* is not alone in wanting to attract a younger readership — as the twig vibrates ceaselessly with the constant dropping of the older readership, every publication wants to attract a younger readership. So if Mandi's scheme reaps the fat rewards it's marketwise researchers evidently anticipate, how far off can that day be when the Editor of *The Times* calls me into his office, gazes uncomfortably out over Wapping to avoid my eyes, clears his throat a couple of times, and finally asks how I would feel about, er? Tastefully, of course. Nicely lit. Do you want a candlewick bedspread with a Persian kitten and a white telephone, nothing like that?

And how, no less important, should I reply? Mortgages have to be repaid, insurance premiums kept up, shoes cobbled, road fund discs gummed on, papers delivered, cabs hailed, drains rodded out.

Indeed, how would you reply? For never forget that prudence is a currency — ask the Duchess of York, ask James Hewitt, ask Max Clifford — and even the meekest of us carries at least a few small coins about his person; so if the young really do pant for a glimpse of this or that, and especially the other, where is the bottom line, as it were, to be drawn? Suppose you're a middle-aged man and you've just had a VAT visit, nice young woman, worked out there was a shortfall of £387.40, but if you cared to come across with a couple of cheeky 108s glossies she'd call it quits, what would you do? Trickier yet, should the young chap servicing your Rover declare that the transmission was a bit iffy, we could be looking at five large ones here, squire, unless of course ...

All in all, a bit of a midlife crisis, really.



Keep the question simple

The answer depends on the question. That is the curse of answers. The oracle at Dodona spoke in the gurgling water that flowed through the roots of the sacred oak. The oracle at Delphi spoke in the ecstatic shrieks of the Pythian priestess. The oracle of Faunus interpreted a suppliant's dreams after making him sleep in the skin of a newly slain sheep. The acolytes translated these mystic notions for a fee, and with careful ambiguity. When asked the outcome of war between Athens and Persia, Delphi predicted only that "a great army will be

ed Treaty of Rome. Only the Hebrides and Shetland Islands voted against. On the evidence of the opinion polls, the same result would obtain today. The referendum lobby has therefore to think of questions that are either loaded or bafflingly complex.

The question that William Cash, MP, wants to refer to the British people would shrivel the sacred oak and silence the Pythian virgin. "Do you want the United Kingdom to propose and insist on irreversible changes in the Treaty on European Union, so that the UK retains its powers of government and is not part of a federal Europe nor part of a European monetary union, including a single currency?"

John Redwood and Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party have as yet been unable to formulate a question. *The Times* recently came to their aid with "Do you support a Europe of nation states or a European superstate?", or else "Who should run Britain: Westminster or Brussels?" They might make it easier for themselves and try "Do you want live free and brave under the Union Jack or be enslaved to a dastardly foreign power?" That is the curse of referendums. When you have already decided the answer, it is tough having to write the question.

There is only one question about Europe that merits being put to the British people. It should have been put after Maastricht and every subsequent renegotiation. The question is, "Should Britain accept the terms of the new European Union treaty?" This meets the customary criteria for referendums. It is short and simple. The issue is the clear-cut acceptance or rejection of a document. The question is not vulnerable to "It all depends what you mean by ..." The subject is of constitutional moment and the parties in Parliament are divided on it.

The referendum lobbyists do not want this question. The reason is that it cannot ensure the answer they want, which is No. A similar question was asked by Harold Wilson in his 1975 referendum, and 67 per cent voted for the renegotiation

Gallup's description, that the chapter would "guarantee workers' rights ... and encourage worker participation". Mr Cash would doubtless have substituted "raise costs across Britain and lose millions of jobs".

The message I would take from these polls is that the British public still supports the European adventure. It does not want a precipitate withdrawal and would punish any party that dallied with that option. Evidence for this is that 37 per cent of Gallup's sample identified with Labour's policy, while only 18 per cent identified with the Government's more sceptical line.

The public is not enthusiastic for any new treaty constraints on Britain's independence. It hates the common agricultural and fisheries policies and wants no truck with a common currency. MORI finds substantial swings over the past three years towards rejoining the exchange-rate mechanism, and Gallup finds a swing towards signing the social chapter. Yet both polls show a steady narrowing of the gap between opposition to and support for the European Union as such.

This is clear as mud. What the public appears to want is for Britain to be in Europe but bad-tempered. It wants the benefits of community — no passports, free trade, workers' rights — without such disbenefits as foreign immigrants, a single currency or a diminution of parliamentary sovereignty. It dislikes what it can see of Europe, but still prefers the Brussels Devil to the deep blue sea. Ministers are thus expected to stand no nonsense and fight for Britain. They should batter Brussels to the limit of endurance, but then back off.

For any government, the trick is to know how far to go in pandering to such tabloid politics. Mr Major's position on ratifying European treaties has always

been shambolic. The Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, said throughout the Maastricht process that British negotiators were "subject to the will of Parliament". A referendum, said Mr Major, was "not the British way". He even suggested that the public had been consulted at the 1992 general election, despite the three big parties all having been in favour of Maastricht's ratification. Yet far from deferring to the will of Parliament, Mr Major and Mr Hurd drove the treaty through the Commons on a three-line whip. Even Wilson did not do this, winning his 1975 renegotiation on a free Commons vote, despite splitting his party down the middle.

I am in favour of a referendum because I believe the public, not just its representatives, is entitled to an opinion on a treaty so important to its identity and prosperity as those periodic emanating from the European Union. But the public deserves a simple question. Sir James Goldsmith's eruption into British politics is colourful. His money dazes impressionable journalists and frightens paranoid Tory managers. But he will prove electorally no more potent than the Maharis' Natural Law Party (which also fielded over 300 candidates at the last election). And he pollutes the case for a referendum by harnessing it to a cause whose partiality demands such daft questions as yesterday's from Mr Cash. This confuses the medium with the message.

Mr Major has wobbled and wavered over a referendum, apparently desperate to please all sides. He has pleased none. After facing down opposition from his colleague Kenneth Clarke, Mr Major's final compromise, for a referendum only on joining a single currency and only after Cabinet and Parliament have agreed to join, seems designed to prejudice the outcome. He has changed his position since Maastricht, but been unable to effect a deft U-turn because of his vulnerability to the Europeans.

Mr Cash is right to press for a referendum on more than just a single currency, but wrong to load the question or fix the timing to get the rejection he wants. His antics would get short shrift from the priestess at Delphi. "If you proceed in this way, a great deal will be destroyed." When asked about his tactics on radio yesterday, Mr Cash tried to claim that the party threatened by them was Labour. That is what happens to a man who trifles with the Pythian ecstasies.

Why the Czechs are different

Prague's past is still potent, says Mark Frankland

The Czech Republic's claim to be the most politically predictable country in the former Soviet bloc has been shaken by last month's inconclusive election. The Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, who narrowly failed to win the majority he expected for his three-party conservative coalition, found himself at the mercy of his old rival, President Vaclav Havel. The President waited until last Thursday before asking Klaus to form a minority Government.

Klaus and Havel may be the most successful democratic politicians to have emerged from Eastern Europe's anti-Communist revolutions, but they have never hit it off. Klaus is a self-confident economist, mastermind of an unprecedented smooth transition from a planned to a market economy. Havel is a writer who suffered under Communism, the champion of a moral, rather than a money-making, society. The two men, though, do have one thing in common: reason to be grateful to the Czech Communists against whom they both fought in 1989.

The Communists have been absent from the negotiations over the new Government, because with only 10 per cent of the popular vote they are minor players in the Czech political game. When reformist governments in Poland and Hungary faltered, the former Communists moved back into power. Havel and Klaus have the luxury of knowing that whatever happens to the new Government, their own Communists will not emerge as eventual winners.

The reason lies in the curious nature of the party that was jettisoned by power by the Prague crowds at the end of 1989. Even by the standards of a Soviet bloc in decay, it was a wretched organisation, scared of the rather passive people it ruled over and unable to change course, even to survive. Polish and Hungarian Communists were much quicker on their feet in 1989, and thereby prepared the way for their return to government today. The Czech Communists' mistake was to be tempted by reform 20 years too soon. The 1968 Prague Spring's slogan of "socialism with a human face" would have done nicely in 1989. It would not have kept the Communists in power, but it could have provided them with credentials for becoming the democratic left-wing party that their Hungarian and Polish counterparts now claim to be.

The tens of thousands of Czech Communists purged from the party when the hardliners re-established themselves after 1968 included everyone capable of seeing that the system needed radical change. Among them was Milos Zeman, now leader of the Social Democrats. They were the unexpectedly strong runners-up in the elections, and are well placed to put pressure on Klaus's minority Government.

Unlike the Hungarian Prime Minister, Gyula Horn, or the Polish President, Alexander Kwasniewski, Zeman leads a party that was not created by demoralised Communists prepared to do anything to save their skins. The history of Czech Social Democracy goes back more than a century, and the present party was revived after 1989 by former party members who remembered the pre-war Czech democracy.

Another favour that the Czech Communist party did Klaus and Havel was to destroy its patriotic credentials. After the collapse of the Prague Spring, hardline Communists calculated that survival depended on mimicking the sclerotic Soviet leadership. Even if they had understood the damage their policies were causing, there was nothing they could do about it. If we deviate from the Soviet line and liberalise, a Politburo member is supposed to have said, "the people will string us up".

Hungary's Communists were too nimble to fall into this trap, for many shared the gloomy Hungarian obsession with the survival of their race. This was tellingly revealed in the way they made known their fears for the large Hungarian minority in Romania. Ethnic problems of this kind were never publicly admitted, so foreign visitors to Budapest were discreetly steered towards the writer Gyula Illyés, who, with charm and authority, would describe the Ceausescu regime's mistreatment of the Transylvanian Hungarians. And it was tribal panic that pushed Hungarian Communists into reforms that led to their losing power. If Hungary's decline was not stopped, they cautioned, the country would sink to the status of a quaint ethnic island with an exotic language — an intolerable prospect for a people who never forget they were once co-rulers of the Habsburg Empire.

In 1989, shrewd Polish Communists, President Kwasniewski among them, worked with the Opposition to bring their country safely out of the Soviet orbit. Had the Communists not behaved as patriots, they wouldn't be back in power today, seeking to join Nato and the EU.

The Czech past has given Klaus and Havel another advantage. In contrast to Hungary and Poland, Czechoslovakia's pre-war democracy worked. It was also a more egalitarian society, with strong peasant farmers and a skilled working class. Klaus showed his political skill by not directly attacking this tradition, of which Havel is the modern representative. Klaus kept rents and energy prices low, and held back from closing all loss-making factories: unemployment is only 2.8 per cent. Klaus has also carried out Eastern Europe's most egalitarian privatisations. Without such prudence, inspired by the past, the Social Democrats would have done even better in the elections — but not the Communists.

Black book

MEMO TO Conservative ministers regarding the party conference in Brighton: "Duck!" Max Clifford, publicist and self-publicist, has teamed up with Sara Keays, the former friend of Cecil Parkinson, to help to launch her novel at the conference in October.

Her publisher, Doubleday, has already met Mr Clifford — whose coups include the story of David Mellor making love in a Chelsea football strip, Freddie Starr eating a hamster and O.J. Simpson's appearance at the Oxford Union. "We are in discussions at the moment," says the publisher. "He is interested and so are we."

The novel, called *The Black Book*, is based on the whips' secret record of MPs' private lives. It is likely to coincide with the launch of a frank confessional work by Steven Norris, Minister for Transport and mistresses, as well as a literary tour de force by the defunct Tory, Emma Nicholson.

"The Tory party needs publicity at the time of the party conference," says Clifford. "I like to think I'll be helping them."

● Chaotic scenes in Lord North Street as the Tory Right assembled at Jonathan Aitken's house to

offer their obeisances to Sir James Goldsmith, entrepreneur. In the mêlée, the journalist Sir Peregrine Worsthorne began to drive up the street the wrong way. As the assembled hacks, photographers and guests hailed at him to turn away, he waved them off thinking they were merely his hysterical fans.

China doll

THE HOTTEST new star on London's canapé circuit is Deng Lin, 22.

HELLO SIR JAMES



night cigar-chomping, so dinners have been brought forward to ensure he gets his sleep. "All evening functions will be over by 10pm, which is about an hour earlier than usual," explains a source. "He's up at the crack of dawn. I suppose it's the prison routine."

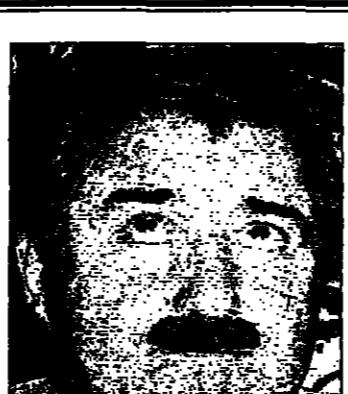
Noises off

AS the Royal Opera House held its breath last night to see if Roberto Alagna's hay-fever would allow him to take to the stage in *Don Carlos*, more trouble was simmering backstage. News reaches me, sotto voce, that Clive Timms, the finance director who arrived at Covent Garden from ITN and has presided over a wave of redundancies, is himself now unhappy in work.

He is said to have missed at least one crucial board meeting to discuss the House's finances, earning considerable criticism from other big noises. There is even talk of an acrimonious departure. "A storm in a teacup," says the House. "He is back at work looking perfectly happy."

Touché tache

WHATEVER the results for England on the field during Euro 96, the winner on the bench may be

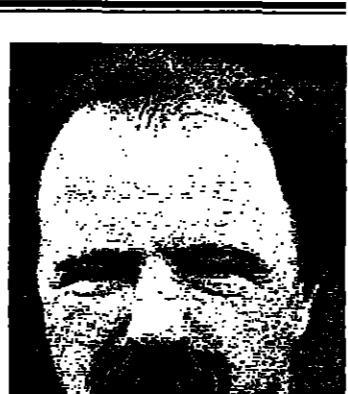


Is Venables (left) paying lip-service to Artur Jorge?

facial hair. After reports yesterday that spoon-bender Uri Geller has been called up by Terry Venables to help his players, I am told that the team coach is now planning to cultivate a lucky moustache.

Venables is said to have noticed the authority with which Artur Jorge, the Swiss manager, directs his players from behind a magnificent black thatch, thicker than a hula dancer's skirt. The Dutch and Portuguese coaches, Guus Hiddink and Antonio Oliveira, also sport the dead hamster look.

Some advice, however, comes from Daniel Rouah, keeper of some of the capital's most luxuriant facial furniture: keep it thin. A



thick moustache will tempt its owner to chew it.

● Pity poor Sarah Connolly, a promising young diva who made her Glyndebourne debut this year as *Madam Lina in Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin*. She missed her second performance on Monday evening, after putting the wrong date in her diary. The show was delayed more than an hour as an understudy was found, but the opera house was forgiving: "I'm sure it won't affect her career," said a Sussex sojourn.

P.H.S

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ECHOES OF MAASTRICHT

A loud cry of referendum from the Commons

In his search for party unity on Europe, John Major is a man in chase of a fluttering leaf forever being blown out of his grasp. His *White Paper* in the spring was supposed to have something to appeal to all Conservative MPs. Then, lest the Euro-sceptics were not satisfied, the Prime Minister's new policy of non-cooperation in Europe was intended as a further nod in their direction: if any trouble was expected, it should have come from the Euro-enthusiasts. Now 74 of Mr Major's own backbenchers have supported a Bill demanding a referendum on Europe and, by implication, an undertaking that the Government will attempt to repatriate powers at the forthcoming IGC.

For this latest blast of cold wind, Mr Major has only himself to blame. Nothing that the Prime Minister has done since he bulldozed the Maastricht Bill through the Commons has been able to heal the rift that the process opened up in the Tory party. Echoes of Maastricht still resonate along Commons corridors. And they show no signs of dying down.

Of those who supported Bill Cash's Referendum Bill yesterday, all but a handful were long-standing sceptics. This was not a cowardly, pre-emptive act by MPs trying to stave off a challenge from Referendum Party candidate in their own constituencies at the next general election. Those MPs who voted for a referendum were thinking as much of the past as of the future. They are worried not just about further integration in Europe but about the extent of integration that has already been agreed.

So are the British people. In a Gallup poll on Monday, the vision of Europe which

attracted most support was "a less integrated Europe than now, with the EU amounting to little more than a free trade area". This was more popular than withdrawal, more popular than the status quo and more popular than further integration. Yet the British people never had the chance to express that view when voters in France, Denmark and Ireland held their referendums. Nor, in effect, did MPs. A combination of bribery, blackmail and bullying won Mr Major his Bill and its belated opt-out – just. This was not parliamentary democracy at its best: the prize has been paid ever since.

However fierce his protestations, the backbenchers do not believe that their leader is the biggest sceptic in the Cabinet. They do not trust him to stay firm over beef. They do not have confidence that he will risk *unpopularity at the IGC* by demanding a rethink of the Maastricht changes. They are not even sure that he will keep Britain out of a single currency. So low is the Prime Minister's stock that his own backbenchers want him to be bound by the electorate's views before he even enters the negotiations. This state of affairs has come about because Mr Major has been unable to say clearly what he believes, to stick to that line and to act upon it. He has too often preferred to tell listeners what he thinks they want to hear. Seventy-four members of the governing party were yesterday prepared publicly to embarrass their leader. This grouping would be larger still were Conservative MPs freed from the constraints of office – a freedom that remains much the most likely result of the next election.

ARTS OF GOLD

Exquisite touchstones of humanity's enduring obsession

When the gleaming treasures which it has been his life's pleasure to collect are placed in Somerset House, Arthur Gilbert will have provided this great Neo-Classical palace overlooking the Thames with its appropriate complement of gilded splendour. Its vaults, so evocative of Piranesi's etchings of classical ruins, could have been designed with just such intricate and splendid triumphs of ostentation in mind. For the classical world was never, as it is too often imagined today, chastely monochromatic and marble. And to its Renaissance reinventors, whether Palladio, whose ideas influenced Sir William Chambers's design for this great 18th-century palace, or the Adam brothers, "classical austerity" was a concept with no Puritan underpinnings.

They and their peers enriched the architectural purity of line of their exteriors with urns, rustication and statuary. As for their interiors, they may have shunned the vivid blues and reds that in ancient times would have covered the now pallid Parthenon; but gilding adorned their mouldings. In the light, spacious rooms were ormolu clocks, gilt or pure gold tableware, chased looking-glasses, ornaments, all proudly set to advantage.

Few of these collections remain intact. Some were sold – and some of those parted with in this century were happily purchased by Mr Gilbert – but much will have been simply melted down. For the peculiarly hard fate of the great goldsmith is that in every age, his swords are forever being beaten into something new.

He works in metal so indestructible by nature that his masterpieces may, long ages later, rise from forgotten tombs to confront an awe-struck Schliemann with "the face of Agamemnon". Yet precisely because his raw material is so passionately prized, the chances are that man will rapidly recycle it, whether to fit changing tastes or, as coinage, to meet the financial demands of wars in

pursuit of still more treasure. We know that the ancient Greek world was awash with gold and silver artefacts which were prized far above the painted vases by which their plastic arts are chiefly represented in our museums. But the golden glories of Priam or of Philip of Macedon are exceptions to the curse that falls particularly hard on those works of Ozymandias, king of kings, that were forged in the goldsmith's furnace. The lament of Propertius, that men came to worship gold to the neglect of the gods – and to the point that on earth, "by gold good faith is banished and justice is sold" – provides all the clue that is required.

Thanks in part to the gloomy art of the reliquary, the Church has proved a more effective custodian of wrought and jewelled art than were the patrons of antiquity. But gold in secular hands fared much as before. Were it not for the survival, in Vienna, of the great encrusted gold and enamel salt-cellar he created for François I, we would have to take largely on trust the proud boast of Benvenuto Cellini, the 16th-century Florentine, that he was not only a brilliant sculptor but the greatest goldsmith of his age. In the paintings of Veronese or Giulio Romano, gold and silverware is piled in proud display before the eyes of the banqueters. Was it melted down, like the French silverware that Louis XIV imperiously called in from France's greatest houses to fund his endless military campaigns?

Over this history of man's destructive ways with the treasures that most inspire his lust, Mr Gilbert has scored a notable victory. He offers Britain marvels. They include not only the most magnificent collection of gold boxes in private hands but some of the greatest silver and silver-gilt work, by De Lamerie and Storr, ever created within these shores. These survivors from history's lost troves are glorious fragments to "shore against our ruin". His gift is an act of rare imagination and generosity.

RESURRECTION IN THE CITY

The way is again open to restore St Ethelburga

Rarely has the assertion of eternal Providence followed such a circuitous logic as in the case of St Ethelburga, the medieval church which was severely damaged by the Bishopsgate bomb three years ago. From the beginning, *The Times* has supported the campaign for complete restoration, but the Diocese of London has stubbornly opposed it. After much delay, the Anglican authorities advocated a design by the architects Blee Ettwein Bridges, which would have encased the ruins in a glass and steel box. Yesterday the City of London's planning committee overwhelmingly rejected that undistinguished proposal, which would have pre-empted the IRA's handiwork forever. There is now a real chance that St Ethelburga will be rebuilt and with it the reputation of our Church of England as custodian of our ecclesiastical architecture.

For this to happen, however, the new Bishop of London will have to make his presence felt. Bishop Charlottes is unencumbered by the Church's egregious bungling of this sensitive issue in the past. Moreover, he is known for his integrity and love of tradition. This suggests that he might see the merits of careful reconstruction on the lines proposed by the architects Rothermel, commissioned by the Friends of St Ethelburga.

He will need to be firm with his diocesan colleagues, some of whom may wish to waste further time and money on an appeal against the planning decision; and he should insist that the Church now respond to public

and professional opinion. It is high time that the diocese concentrated its energies on the rebuilding of the estimated £2 million which it will cost to rebuild.

There are genuine practical objections to the restoration of St Ethelburga. It may be argued that a depopulated City with too many churches could do with fewer; or that it is impossible to recreate an exact facsimile, merely a pastiche. But the public outcry has already disproved the claim that this unique building is redundant; and the accusation of pastiche could equally have been levelled at its Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian restorers. Abroad, the same debates have often come to the same conclusion. In Parma, for example, the population recently voted by a large majority to rebuild the royal palace, destroyed in the last war, rather than have a modern concert hall designed by the fashionable architect Mario Botta.

The Church of St Ethelburga survived the Great Fire and the Blitz before falling victim to terrorists. Given the extraordinary circumstances of the church's latest desecration, a grant from the National Lottery to help with rebuilding might well be warranted, if such funds were matched by an appeal. The church has an endowment for its upkeep, and the ordeal of the past three years has won it countless new friends; so it need not be a burden on the diocesan purse.

I am assured that the press office at Buckingham Palace played no part in "projecting" the story either. Over matters of this kind school and Palace take exactly the same view.

Yours sincerely,
J. E. LEWIS,
Head Master,
Eton College,
Windsor, Berkshire.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Time to refashion peace in Europe

From Lord Dahrendorf, FBA

Sir, It is time to put a stop to the war games currently played in Europe, and to do so swiftly and firmly. Rather surprisingly, these games seem to be played with special relish in this normally civilised and pacific country, Britain. Perhaps a start can be made here to make peace, not war.

I am a considerable sceptic when it comes to the realities of the EU. These are so far removed from the aspirations of Europeans that the choice is between reforms or irrelevance. This is, however, a different concern from that of the Euro-sceptics who have an itch to leave Europe altogether.

They say: Europe is inexplicably embarked on the road to federalism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Europe is today threatened by fission rather than fusion. In this, as in other respects, the Treaty of Maastricht has not helped: EMU will split rather than unite Europe. We must, therefore, defend the *single market*, pursue such common interests as enlargement to the East and develop the all-important habit of co-operation.

They say: Germany is taking over Europe. It is true that German leaders have not always shown the most exquisite sensitivity when they advocated a "European Germany" as against a "German Europe". For those outside the charmed circle the two are not all that different. Yet no one can seriously doubt the democratic credentials of a now united Germany, or the willingness of that great nation to cooperate with its European partners rather than dominate or turn its back on them.

Have such arguments already become too rational for the present climate? There is after all BSE. To my mind it exposes on the one hand the ineptness of our Government and on the other the health obsessions of Germans (and Americans, and New Zealanders and others). While there probably is no simple answer now, we must surely keep our sense of proportion in dealing with it.

In any case, the hostile rhetoric has to stop. Britain does not need to follow the twisted roads of the EU if it finds a better way, but Britain has to behave as a responsible, mature, European country.

Let us all stop the rot which has set in over the last weeks and months and rebuild confidence and understanding among Europeans so that we can all sing the *Ode to Joy* again without rancour.

Yours sincerely,
RALF DAHRENDORF,
House of Lords.

June 10.

University challenge

From Dr Paul Whittingham

Sir, Dr McCrum ("Degrees of superiority", Education, June 7) suggests reasons for males outperforming females at university. The evidence is in the form of the probability of gaining a first-class degree, which is greater for men than for women.

Dr McCrum seems to have been selective in the statistics used. The Higher Education Statistical Agency publishes data for the university sector which shows, for the pre-1992 universities, that the percentage of firsts gained by women continues to rise.

The probability measure Dr McCrum has used is shown for women a consistent rise (60 per cent to 73 per cent) since 1990, when his data stopped. Women are gaining ground from what could equally well be interpreted as a position determined by prejudice and bias.

Incidentally, does this make the universities of Wales and Northern Ireland inferior to those of Scotland and England, since they award proportionally significantly fewer firsts?

You could argue that men are dumber because they obtain a far greater proportion of thirds.

Yours sincerely,
K. P. WHITTINGHAM
(Research consultant),
16 Maulway Crescent,
Camberley, Surrey.

June 7.

Prince at Eton

From the Head Master
of Eton College

Sir, Professor Hugh Stephenson presumes wrongly (letter, June 6) that the report about HRH Prince William's work being selected for exhibition (details, June 4) did not "help" the media to write it.

Like any school we are pleased when things go well for pupils, whatever their background, but we are as clear as Professor Stephenson would wish us to be that boys in the school should be able to get on with their lives in normal fashion without intrusion by the media. It is our policy not to comment upon or draw attention to the educational progress of individual media to write it.

I am assured that the press office at Buckingham Palace played no part in "projecting" the story either. Over matters of this kind school and Palace take exactly the same view.

Yours sincerely,
J. E. LEWIS,
Head Master,
Eton College,
Windsor, Berkshire.

June 6.

Justice and human rights in Nigeria

From the Executive Director
of Article 19

Sir, Wednesday, June 12, marks the third anniversary of Nigeria's last presidential elections, which were arbitrarily cancelled by the Nigerian military forces when it became clear that Chief Abiola had achieved victory.

Since General Abacha assumed power three years ago there has been an unprecedent attack on the institutions of civil society in Nigeria. Writers and the press, organised labour and trade unions, environmental and minority activists, pro-democracy leaders and human rights defenders have been subjected to gross and systematic human rights violations. These are in flagrant disregard of Nigeria's treaty obligations as a party to the main International Human Rights Convention. By detaining, imprisoning and executing its critics in the name of the law, the military Government has treated the independence of the judiciary with contempt.

Chief Abiola was arrested in June 1994 after having publicly declared himself president and has since remained in detention facing treason charges, which carry a possible death sentence. The military Government has ignored a court order granting him bail and he is reported to be in failing health, at least partly due to his prison conditions. On June 4 his wife, Kudirat Abiola, who had been an active campaigner for her husband's release, was murdered in Lagos (report, June 5), shot dead by men armed with automatic weapons. Her death, following other similar attacks on leading critics of the Government, suggests the emergence of a new and ominous pattern of political killings.

Article 19 is calling for the immediate appointment of an independent judicial commission to investigate Kudirat Abiola's death and the possibility of government culpability. This must include international representatives of recognised integrity, competence and impartiality in order to ensure its independence.

The Abacha Government should be left in no doubt as to the seriousness with which the international community regards its continuing abuse of human rights, attacks on freedom of expression and disregard for the demands of Article 19.

Yours faithfully,
J. S. JENNINGS, Chairman,
Shell Transport and Trading
Company plc,
Shell Centre, SE1.

June 11.

Westminster landscape

From Mr Tom Turner

Sir, Simon Jenkins's idea for a public square at the southern approach to Westminster Bridge (article, June 8) could work, but only in the context of an ambitious landscape plan. Unless they have good access and surrounding uses which generate pedestrian traffic, urban squares are neglected. The solution is to pedestrianise Westminster Bridge and design the island site as a splendid approach to Waterloo Station, the South Bank, St Thomas' Hospital and County Hall.

If our MP's worked beside a brilliant pedestrian scheme, even Euro-sceptics might acquire a taste for making British town centres as attractive to walkers and cyclists as their continental rivals. This is the way to counter city-centre decay and out-of-town shopping.

Yours faithfully,
TOM TURNER,
University of Greenwich,
School of Architecture and
Landscape,
Dartford Campus,
Dartford Lane, Dartford, Kent.

June 9.

TV and the arts

From Dr Anthony Field

Sir, Richard Morrison (Arts, June 1; see also letters, June 7) is wise to take BBC Television to task over its lack of coverage of music, dance and opera. In Scandinavia no state subsidy is available to opera and dance companies and orchestras unless they contract to appear for an agreed minimum number of performances a year on television. The Arts Council of Great Britain has always faltered on this matter because of the concern of unions.

Further, the BBC has readily disbanded its permanent repertory company in the face of the drama talent available in the country. It is a mystery why it continues to pay for a permanent BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Yours truly,
ANTHONY FIELD
(Finance Director,
Arts Council, 1957-84),
152 Cromwell Tower, Barbican, EC2.

June 7.

Swans' way

From Mr Colin D. Long

Sir, The 6.35am from Bedwyn, Wiltshire, to Paddington was delayed this morning, but there were no complaints. Four offspring of a pair of swans were found dithering on the track by the Thames Trains driver. by the side of the Kennet to Avon canal. He stopped the train and carefully carried them towards the canal, where they found their parents.

Quite apart from deserving compensation for this chicanery, the driver succeeded in adding a new term to the railway glossary: "Cygnets on the track" is a worthy excuse.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN D. LONG,
The Hassock, Oxenwood, Wiltshire,
Wenys Bay, Inverclyde.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Cairn Gorm funicular

From Mr N. D. Thomson

Sir, It is gratifying that the directors of the RSPB and National Trust for Scotland (letters, June 1) see fit to unite in taking issue with your editorial (May 27) supporting the proposal to build a funicular railway on Cairn Gorm. To suggest, as you do, that the primary fear is that of scattered bee cans is an insult to deeply felt concerns.

You rightly say that Britain is no Switzerland. That is precisely why the destruction of something as unique and precious as the Cairngorm plateau amounts to an act of national vandalism. You go on to suggest that conservation officials could designate pathways and fence off fragile ecosystems. Try telling that to birds like the dotterel.

Yours truly,
N. D. THOMSON,
Finnock House, Cliff Terrace Road,
Wenys Bay, Inverclyde.

June 10.

Medical aspects of living wills

From Professor Peter H. Millard

Sir Your correspondents (May 29, June 4) focus on the legal niceties of medical treatment of incapacitated patients without regard to the clinical reality of care. I remember with horror the "warehouse" wards of the past where *hordes of bedbound patients* waited interminably to die. By taking an active, optimistic approach



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
June 11: The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda was received by The Queen.

Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge (Chief of the Defence Staff) was received by Her Majesty.

The Rt Hon John Major MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an audience of Her Majesty this evening.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, this afternoon gave a Luncheon for the International Sacred Literature Trust at Buckingham Palace.

His Royal Highness, Patron and Trustee, this evening attended a Banquet to celebrate the Fortieth Anniversary of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at Guildhall, London EC2.

Lady Dugdale has succeeded the Lady Susan Hussey as Lady in Waiting to The Queen.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
June 11: The Prince Edward, International Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation, this afternoon attended a Luncheon at St James's Palace.

His Royal Highness, Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, this evening attended a Banquet at Guildhall, London EC2, to mark the Fortieth Anniversary of the Award.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
June 11: The Princess Royal, President, Save the Children Fund, this afternoon attended the Industry and Commerce Group Meeting at Buckingham Palace.

Her Royal Highness, Patron, the Association of Combined Youth Clubs, this evening visited Young Lewisham Motor Workshop, 124 Kilmore Road, Lewisham, London SE22; Lewisham Way Youth and Community Centre, 138 Lewisham Way, London SE14; and Youth Action, Crofton School, Manwood Road, Catford, London SE4.

CLARENCE HOUSE

June 11: The Lady Angela Oswald has succeeded Mrs Michael Gordon-Lennox as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.

KENSINGTON PALACE
June 11: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon today visited Edinburgh and was received by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Stirling and Falkirk (Colonel James Stirling of Garden).

Her Royal Highness visited Newhouse Business Park and opened the latest phase of the development, Willow House.

The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon subsequently opened the new Workplace Nursery at Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary.

THATCHED HOUSE LODGE
June 11: Princess Alexandra, Patron of the Richmond Fellowship, this afternoon attended a Reception to mark the opening of the St Charles Project, Linthorpe Grove, which was held at the Richmond Fellowship Headquarters, Peacock House, 5 Addison Road, London W14.



The figures represent musicians, dancers and actors popular with court and people

That's showbiz, Tang style

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

FOUR earthenware entertainers made in China between the 7th and 8th centuries and valued at £100,000 are being offered for sale at a London gallery.

The Tang period figures, ranging in height from 12.5cm to 25cm, represent the musicians, dancers, actors and acrobats who were greatly appreciated in their day by both court and people. As in this group, dwarves were often included among such figures.

They are appearing in the summer exhibition *Sculpture and Ornament in Early Chi-*

ne Art

at the gallery of Eskesen Oriental Art, the international dealer. Within

24 hours of opening, 16 of the 33 pieces had been sold for £3.5 million. The exhibits, which span more than 3,000 years, include a delicately-carved bone spatula of the Shang period (13th-12th century BC), archaic bronze wine vessels and exotic animals inlaid with semi-precious stones.

A bronze lamp dating from the Han period (206 BC-220 AD) is cast in the form of a man. The noble figure crouches on one knee, his right arm

supporting a circular tray which would have contained burning oil. Eskesen notes that the figure is modelled with an extraordinary degree of realism for a Chinese bronze of the period.

Another exquisite piece is an ox inlaid with stylised birds and scrolling motifs by a craftsman between the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. The gallery said that such animal figures were often made as elaborate weights to secure fabrics or mats in the tomb.

The exhibition, which opened yesterday, continues until July 13.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Harriet Martineau, novelist, Norwich, 1802; Charles Kingsley, novelist, Holme, Devon, 1819; Sir Oliver Lodge, physicist, Penkhull, Staffordshire, 1851; Anthony Eden, 1st Earl of Avon, Prime Minister 1955-57, Bishop Auckland, Durham, 1897; Leon Goossens, oboist, Liverpool, 1897; Anne Frank, who wrote a diary while hiding from the Nazis, Frankfurt am Main, 1929.

DEATHS: William Collins, poet, Chichester, 1799; Edward Troughton, scientist and instrument maker, London, 1835; Thomas Arnold, educa-

tor, Rugby, 1842; William Cullen Bryant, poet, New York, 1878; John Nicholson Ireland, composer, Washington, Sussex, 1962; Sir Herbert Read, poet and critic, Malton, Yorkshire, 1968; Sir Billy Butlin, holiday camp founder, Jersey, 1980; Dame Marie Rambert, founder of the dance company bearing her name, London, 1982.

Magdalen College, Oxford, was founded 1458.

Princess Anne became the Princess Royal, 1987.

Rescue on the drawing board

A NEW use is in sight for one of London's long-empty landmarks, the Roundhouse at Chalk Farm, Camden (Marcus Binney writes).

The Royal Institute of British Architects has approved plans by Sir Michael Hopkins, architect of the new Glyndebourne Opera House, to convert the 1840s locomotive shed as a home for RIBA's vast collection of drawings.

The former curator, John Harris, resigned because there was no space for the collection to grow.

Birthdays today

President Michael Adler, venerologist; St. Mt. George Bush, former American President, 72; Mt C.D.L. Clark, publisher and lawyer, 63; Mr John Copley, opera producer and director, 63; the Earl of Cromorne, 48; Mr Vic Damone, singer, 63.

Mr Michael Fabricant, 46; St. Peter Frobisher, former Vice-Chancellor, The Queen's University, Belfast, 68; Lady Herries of Terregles, racehorse trainer, 58.

St. Kenneth Hollings, former High Court judge, 78; Mr Pat Jennings, footballer, 51; Mr Peter Jones, actor, 76; Lord Justice Kennedy, 61; Viscount Knollys, 65; Mr Oliver Knussen, composer, 44; Lord McCluskey, 67; Dr Ernest Mario, former chief executive, Glaxo Holdings, 58; Lord Mayhew, 81; Mr John Townsend, MD, 62.

University of Bristol

The 1996 Annual General Meeting of Convocation, at which the election of representatives of Convocation on Court and the election of the Standing Committee of Convocation will take place, will be held on Saturday, July 20, 1996, at 10.00am in the Junior Common Room of Clifton Hill House, Bristol, BS8 1BX. All former students and academic staff of the University are welcome to attend. Further information and the current Convocation Yearbook may be obtained from Dr M.J. Crossley Evans, FSA, Clerk to Convocation, University of Bristol, Senate House, Bristol, BS8 1TH.

Dean of St Paul's

The Very Rev Dr John Moses, Provost of Chelmsford, diocese of Chelmsford, is to be Dean of the Cathedral Church of St Paul in London, diocese of London, succeeding the Very Rev Eric Evans, who retires on September 30.

BIRTHS

CHAPMAN - On June 3rd, 2.45 pm at The Portland Hospital, to James and Caroline, a daughter, Charlotte Lauren, a sister for Thomas.

CODRINGTON - To Amanda (née McCullough) and Hugo, on June 8th, a son, Alexander.

DE LAMBREY - On June 7th, 10.30 am at St. Paul's, to Mathilde, and Hubert, a beautiful daughter, Victoria, a sister for Constance.

FAHEY - On June 8th 1996, to David and Suzy (née Hutchinson), a son, William George, a brother for Rose and Patrick.

JAMIESON - On June 8th, at 10.30 am at St. Paul's, to Richard (née Peart) and Vicki, a daughter, Sophie Tiffany.

JOHNSTON - To Kevin and Yvonne (née Best), a son, Christopher, on June 8th 1996, a brother for Edward.

LEWRY - Benedict Dermot, born 1996, 8.46 am, 6oz, to grand parents, Francis and Andrew.

MASSEY - On June 7th at The Elstree Hotel, to Alan (née Alexander) and William, a son, Thomas Michael Orgill.

MCCARTHY - To June 10th, at Chichester, a daughter, Jo (née Revlin), a son, Sebastian David (née Best), a son, Christopher.

FITZGERALD - Sue and John, a son, Michael William Tancer, a brother for Macmillan and Alexander.

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JOHNSTON - To Kevin and Yvonne (née Best), a son, Christopher, on June 10th 1996, a brother for Edward.

OATES - To Ruth (née Jayne) and Tim on June 10th, a son, Jack Thompson, 8.46 am, 6oz.

ROPER-CALDBECK - On June 3rd, to Maria (née Green) and James, a beautiful daughter, Olivia Jade, 8.06 2oz.

SHREFFER - On June 8th, at 10.30 am at St. Paul's, to Juliet and Terence, a son, Oliver James.

STEWART - To Gillian (née Wedderburn), a daughter, on June 10th June 1996, a son, Hector Alastair William, a brother for Archie and Sophia.

DEATHS

TORRES-HERRERA - On June 7th at The Portland Hospital, to Mario Del Rosario and Alfonso, a son and daughter.

UNDERHALFAY - On 6th June, at 10.30 am at St. Paul's, to Glynne-Anne and Glenn, a beautiful daughter, Olivia, a sister for Thomas.

WALTER - On May 23rd, to Giles and Sarah (née Duxley-Smith), a daughter, Susanna Clare, a sister for Jonathan.

CODRINGTON - To Amanda (née McCullough) and Hugo, on June 8th, a son, Alexander.

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DEATHS

CLARKE - Dr. Margaret Mary, widow of George and John, died on June 1st and is survived by her son, St. Mt. C.D.L. Clark, publisher and lawyer, 63; Mr John Copley, opera producer and director, 63; the Earl of Cromorne, 48; Mr Vic Damone, singer, 63.

FLYNN - Edith Mary on June 1st at Church Street, Shropshire, England, aged 97. Burial at St. Mary's Church, Shropshire, on June 12th.

GRIMES - The Revd Canon Dr. Margaret Grimes, of St. Peter's Church, Glastonbury, died on June 1st at 10.20 am.

GOODWIN-AUSTEN - June peacefully on 10th June 1996 from injuries in a car accident, his wife, a dear mother, remained and loved by all. Funeral service for the family and friends on Friday 13th June at 1.30pm at St. Peter's Church, Glastonbury.

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GOUGH - Peacefully on June 9th at The Knoll Nursing Home, Walmer, Kent. Mr. & Mrs. Gough, by family and friends.

HALL - Peacefully on June 9th at a fall at home. Mark Frederick, aged 81, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Hall and father of Joanne and Mark, died on June 9th at 10.30 am.

HARRIS - June 9th at 10.30 am. Beloved sister, aunt, great-aunt and friend to all. Funeral service on Friday 13th June at 1.30pm at St. Peter's Church, Glastonbury.

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OBITUARIES

ALAN WEEKS

Alan Weeks, BBC sports commentator, died yesterday aged 72. He was born on September 8, 1923.

ALAN WEEKS was to figure skating what Brian Johnston was to cricket, and what Dan Maskell was to tennis. He was one of the pioneers of television sports journalism, when production was still a little rough around the edges. One of the last voices to be associated with the original team of *Grandstand*, he introduced English viewers to a baffling vocabulary of double axels, triple salchows, lutes, spread eagle jumps and flying camels. He encouraged British ice skaters through a string of dazzling Olympic victories in the 1970s and 1980s, and instilled a rare state of pride in a nation of armchair-bound sportsmen.

Weeks attended both winter and summer Olympic Games. He witnessed John Curry becoming the first Englishman ever to win an Olympic figure skating title in Montreal in 1976. He was behind the microphone when Robin Cousins won the gold in Moscow four years later. Most memorably, he gave the emotional commentary on the gold medal-winning performance in ice dance by Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean at Sarajevo in 1984. Accompanied by the urgent beat of Ravel's *Bolero*, this earned the young skaters a string of nine perfect marks of 6.0 for artistic interpretation.

Weeks was an enormous fan of these two skaters. He had watched them perform since they were little more than children. Despite his best efforts, his voice often choked with pride when he watched them. But he rose to the intensity of their performance on this occasion and also two weeks later when they repeated it at the world championships in Ottawa. A power cut disrupted this latter competition and the couple's performance was put back, with the result that it could not be broadcast live until four o'clock in the morning. A great many people in Britain stayed up with Weeks to watch them.

Weeks's success as a commentator was based on his enthusiasm, professionalism and — most importantly in the frenzied world of broadcasting — amiability. Producers knew that they could call on him at the last minute for a commentary on an obscure sport about which no one else knew anything. He did his homework quickly and always managed a professional job. But, in the case of winter sports, this was a brilliant job. He remained calm and cool to work with but there was a stubborn streak in him, particularly if he wanted to make a special



point in a commentary about a sportsman's performance.

Apart from ice skating, he was also an expert on swimming, ice hockey, gymnastics and football. He became an energetic director, during the 1970s, of the Sports Aid Foundation. He was in addition the original presenter, from 1970 to 1984, of *Pot Black* on BBC2, the programme which popularised the game of snooker.

Alan Frederick Weeks was born in Bristol but moved to Brighton at the age of five, and remained firmly attached to the area. His father was connected with the management of the pier. He lived throughout his life in Hove, moving to three different houses in the same street.

He was educated at the Hove and Sussex Grammar School, and went to sea as a 16-year-old cadet in the Merchant Navy. Two years later, in 1941, he transferred to the Royal Navy as a midshipman.

He was demobilised as a lieutenant

in April 1946 and returned to Brighton. The local sports stadium gave him his first job. He was appointed publicity manager of the stadium, which incorporated an ice rink, and secretary of the local ice hockey club, the Tigers, a job he kept until 1965. He worked all hours, arranging table tennis tournaments, publicising boxing matches, preparing ice shows.

He also made the public address announcements at the ice rink and one day he had the good fortune to be overheard by Peter Dimmock, co-founder of an early sports programme, *Sportsview*. Dimmock was impressed and asked Weeks to audition at the BBC, which he did during the second period of an ice hockey match. He was told that this would be a recording, not live. But then suddenly plans changed and it was decided to put the third period of the game out to listeners live, with Weeks behind the microphone. Weeks rose triumphantly to the occasion, gave a masterly commentary and

was welcomed into the BBC sports team.

His first broadcast for the BBC was in 1951. These were the early days of live broadcasting, when events often strayed far from the original script, and when broadcasters were required to be versatile and to keep up an intelligent flow of comment, even when nothing was happening. Ice skating, for instance, was then often held in outside rinks, and performances could be stopped when the weather became rough. Weeks, microphone in hand, and stationed underneath a voluminous umbrella, would carry on talking while the resurfacing machine steadily ploughed its way around the rink.

Britain's history of success in ice skating began in 1952 when Lawrence Demmy and Jean Westwood won the first of their three gold medals in the world championships. In 1958 Weeks was sent to Bratislava to cover the European championships, and the world championships in Paris, where he watched June Markham and Courtney Jones win the ice dance title for the second time. He was in Prague, ready to cover the world championships in 1961, when the plane carrying the American team crashed, killing the entire group. The competition was cancelled.

Weeks was, therefore, halfway through his career, and already established as the voice of figure skating, by the time that Britain entered its golden decade in the sport, from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. He was also commenting on swimming at the time; so that, in 1976, he was behind the microphone when John Curry won his gold in the men's figure skating at the Winter Olympics and David Wilkie won his gold in the 200m breaststroke that summer. And he repeated this double four years later, with Robin Cousins and Duncan Goodhew, who won the 100m breaststroke. It seemed that every time he picked up his microphone, Britain won a gold medal.

He ended his association with Torvill and Dean in the Winter Olympics at Lillehammer in 1994. An astonishing 23.9 million people in Britain tuned in to the competition to see if the couple could repeat their Olympic gold (they narrowly missed). But it was a figure which will probably not be reached in sports television again, particularly with the proliferation of satellite television. Weeks was stunned when he was told of the figure. But he had always been a modest man. He only retired finally last March after the world figure skating championships in Canada.

He is survived by his wife Jane, and by a son. Another son and daughter predeceased him.

THE VEN PETER MALLETT

The Ven Peter Mallett, CB, Chaplain-General to the Forces, 1974-80, died on June 5 aged 70. He was born on September 1, 1925.

FEW Chaplains-General have managed to relate so closely with all ranks of the Army and their families as did Archdeacon Peter Mallett. He won the complete confidence of the Army Board and brought his enthusiasm for the enjoyment of a Christian life to other ranks as steadily as he ploughed his way around the rink.

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1967, he was sent out as senior chaplain of the Aden Brigade with the task of supervising the regimental padres of units fighting in the arid mountains of the Radfan.

During the evacuation of Aden in November of that year, he had to wind up the military churches and was the last chaplain to leave. He then had a short spell with the Berlin Brigade before taking over the prized job of being senior chaplain to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. It was here that he began to show his great sense of ceremonial, besides being able to hold the most cynical of officer cadets spellbound when preaching in the Academy's Memorial Chapel.

From 1972 onwards, he moved rapidly to the top of the Chaplains' Department. He was promoted to the Infantry Junior Leaders Regiment at Oswestry, he brought forth an enthusiastic response from the impressionable young men and the permanent staff, teaching the basics of the Christian faith in the classroom and accompanying the boys on exercises on Dartmoor and in the Welsh mountains.

Promoted senior chaplain in 1965 and posted to 7th Armoured Brigade in Germany, began to show his qualities of leadership. Many of the novel ideas which he introduced became common practice in the Army. When the Aden crisis erupted in

conditions, consequential increases in standards and of the numbers of men seeking to become chaplains, the continuation training scheme and creation of the chaplains' mobile display to "show the flag" at army displays and tournaments. Most memorable of all was his personal contribution to great ceremonial occasions, such as the presentations of colours and the Remembrance Day services at cenotaphs at home and overseas.

Important though these were, the greatest contribution made by him and his wife during his tenure was their ability to bring the Christian message to all ranks and their families. He was appointed Honorary Chaplain to the Queen in 1973 and CB in 1978.

After he retired in 1980, he became managing director for Inter-Church Travel for five years. He was appointed a canon of the diocese of Gibraltar in Europe in 1982. A heart condition reduced his activities in later years. He died suddenly while preparing for the bicentenary celebrations of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department.

He married Joan Margaret Bremer in 1958. She survives him, together with a son and two daughters.

Brian Hartley, CMG, MBE, former Colonial Service officer and specialist in tropical agriculture, died in Mombasa, Kenya on June 5 aged 88. He was born in Kegworth, Leicestershire, on July 31, 1907.

BRIAN HARTLEY must have been one of the most eccentric and talented agricultural officers

ers to be recruited by the Colonial Office. His father and grandfather were both civil servants of Yorkshire farming stock. These associations prompted his going to the Midland Agricultural College, Loughborough. He next won a Colonial Service scholarship to Oxford and later to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad.

He was educated at the Hove and Sussex Grammar School, and went to sea as a 16-year-old cadet in the Merchant Navy. Two years later, in 1941, he transferred to the Royal Navy as a midshipman.

He was demobilised as a lieutenant

farmer in Yorkshire and might well have left the farm to his nephew. But Hartley was certain that he wanted to go abroad. The other, Ernest, had made money in India and bought an estate in Ireland. Where Hartley spent happy holidays playing with his pretty young cousin, Vivien. Unfortunately, Ernest lost all his money in the crash of 1929. Vivien had to work. She became an actress, changing

her name from Hartley to Leigh and going on to marry Laurence Olivier.

In 1929 he took up his first post as an agricultural officer in a district of Tanganyika (now Tanzania). He was given few instructions, beyond being told that his predecessor had vanished and had never been seen again.

The district was much troubled by locusts. Hartley was the first man to observe the

change (then known only in theory) that comes over grain locusts when they have finished swarming before laying their eggs. This enabled him to develop new ways of dealing with them.

He acted always with a bold independence, closing most of the useless cotton seed farms and opening a new one on better land that is still today Tanzania's most important research station. His next problem was an outbreak of bubonic plague. His time in Trinidad had given him some knowledge of tropical medicine. He managed to contain the plague in part of his domain by persuading many village chiefs to burn their huts.

When looking for a site for a new settlement near the lake, he shot two impala for the pot, not realising that they were sacred to a local secret society. To erase the memory of the disaster, the people held a special ceremony, involving putting youths into a trance and speaking through them to the gods. Hartley watched. A few nights later, back in Dar es Salaam, he leapt up and plunged through his mosquito net, wrecking it in the process. He had never done such a thing before. He was to do it again and again, frequently leaping out of windows, even off a roof. This sleep-leaping lasted thirty years before it faded and finally stopped. Hartley believed he was the victim of a spell. He learnt later that the secret society never let strangers watch their ceremony; and, if one did, they punished him cruelly.

For his third tour he was sent to Arusha, a town at the foot of Mount Meru, the centre for European settlement. Hartley found working with the settlers awkward, as he did not share many of their views. He preferred dealing with the tribespeople, especially the Maasai.

Hartley was sometimes unorthodox. One tribe was fond of drinking and womanising and so neglected their duties that some 300 households had dangerously low stocks of food. He arrested the most feckless, took them to a

swamp area and made them plant maize. He kept them there for 90 days, by which time the crop had grown and all threat of hunger was gone. It was a novel, if politically incorrect, way of averting a famine.

He had always been determined not to end up penniless, as did most Colonial officers. Land was cheap in Kenya. He bought more than 2,000 acres on the slopes of Mount Kenya for less than £1,000.

In 1938 Hartley was posted to the Aden Protectorate. It was there that he developed a lifelong interest in camels, becoming after two years the assistant commandant of the Camel Corps. It was there, too, that he met Doreen Sanders, the secretary to the Governor. When she first saw him he was dressed up as an Arab. Hearing his perfect Arabic, she concluded that he must be one. They married in the Anglican church in Aden in 1951, but the real celebration was a four-day feast in the desert, complete with horses and camels and guns and whirling dancers.

He also served as a political officer, negotiating peace between warring tribes. He found that bringing people prosperity through agriculture was the way to prevent their killing each other. In Abyan he flooded an area laid waste by feuds and started to grow cotton. The crop's success ended the feuds and instituted a lucrative scheme. It was for this feat that he was appointed CMG.

Hartley remained in Arabia as agricultural adviser until his retirement in 1954, when the family returned to Africa. Thereafter, at first farming his Kenyan farm but later moving to one in Tanzania (confiscated in 1966 by the Nyerere Government), he became an adviser to almost every agricultural project in East Africa and the Middle East, including Iraq, Turkey, Somalia, Yemen and Ethiopia. Finally he became a voluntary consultant to various charities, including Oxfam.

Hartley's last project was a personal one. In 1967, a year of severe drought, he returned to his beloved Tanzania. He decided that what the Maasai needed were camels. There were none in the country, though there are many in Kenya. The advantage of camels over cattle is that they graze at a high level, not damaging the land with their gentle feet. They drink less water and give more milk.

Aged 80, he walked with a troop of camels some 300 miles from northern Kenya to the Tanzanian border. Once the Maasai understood the benefits of herding camels as a supplement to their cattle, they welcomed them. The Tanzanian Government was less enthusiastic, placing many obstacles in his way.

Hartley and his son Kim, using their own funds, persisted. Eighteen months ago, the Government gave their full backing. Hartley, who did so much for so many people with never any thought of self, could at least die happy.

He is survived by his wife, their three sons and one daughter.

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Tuned in to the BBC nightmare

I have seldom been as proud of my fellow hacks as last Friday when, at ludicrously short notice, we were summoned to Broadcasting House to hear something so secret its very subject could not be breached the night before. Upon entering, we were given a two-page press release, which became obsolete the minute the Chairman and Director-General of the BBC had filed into the room and the words "Pack, please" were hurled into the air. Suddenly, we all were supplied with a 21-page document, long on charts, short on verbs, describing in glowing management-speak "A Structure for the Digital Age".

The questions that followed cut right through the gloss. "Is this not just another bureaucratic reshuffling of the cards that will lead to no savings at all?" "Is this not another step in the commercialisation of the BBC?" "Aren't you reorganising for some nebulous future and not for benefit of the licence fee payer?" "Is this not a diminution of the World Service's independence?" "Will this not further depress staff morale?" And, most obvious of all: "Isn't this a downgrading of BBC Radio?"

To all of these John Birt, the Director-General, answered "No". He spoke reprovingly, but more in sorrow than anger. "I'm familiar with your views, Ray." "No, Maggie, that's quite wrong". "I can understand how you might be confused on that, Brenda."

But the answers to the questions are "Yes". It is now obvious that Liz Forgan, managing director, radio, could not stay in an organisation where radio is to lose its corporate identity. It is blindingly clear that the centrepiece of the restructuring — the separation of "broadcasting" from "production" — will be a time-consuming, expensive nightmare for those who work at the BBC. It is well known that the BBC's licence fee payers do not want a 24-hour television news service — and that there is no commercial advantage in one. International television news services have great trouble achieving profitability.

As for what is being done to the World Service, no one could put it better than John Tusa, its former managing director: "The greatest act of bureaucratic vandalism ever committed against the World Service." And who can believe that the young Controller of Radio 1 is the ideal choice to head all of BBC Radio, the jewel in the BBC's crown?

This reorganisation will work. Like a computer game, it has been designed to work. How the BBC might have gone into the next century, loyal to its traditions, to radio, to the symbolic edifice of Broadcasting House itself, must remain speculation.

BRENDA MADDOX

Photo: PA

PA</p

Truth behind the housing market myths

Rachel Kelly, property correspondent, and an expert panel expose five fairytales about homebuying in the 1990s

Dinner parties will never be the same again. A team of experts has joined forces with two distinguished academics to quash some of the most persistent and misleading myths that dog the housing market.

The timing is apposite. It is less than a year to the general election and, as the political temperature rises, politicians on all sides have a stake in confusing the reality of the housing market to bolster their own positions.

Roll up John Stewart, economist at the House-Builders' Federation and Yolande Barnes, head of research at Savills, to put the record straight. A word of caution, though. Both agents and builders have an interest in trying to rebuild confidence in bricks and mortar and in destroying those myths which have turned potential homeowners against buying houses. So an academic balance has been provided by Christine Whitehead, Housing Professor at the London School of Economics; Michael Ball, Professor of Urban Studies at South Bank University; and Anatole Kaliski, economics editor of *The Times*.

The first myth is that houses in Britain are still excessively expensive and swallow up an unacceptable share of people's earnings.

In fact, houses are now exceptionally cheap, by almost any measure. The ratio of house prices to people's incomes is also low by international standards. One of the indicators is the TSB's "affordability" index which tracks the percentage of a typical buyer's and a typical first-time buyer's take-home pay needed to cover a mortgage on an average price home. In the first three months of the year, the cost of buying a home fell by 5.6 per cent. Housing costs now account for 25.6 per cent of take-home pay.

The second myth is that Britain invests too much in houses — money that should be invested in manufacturing. This is completely false. Britain has the lowest share of gross domestic product invested in housing of any developed coun-

try, a point made last month by Professor Ball in his report, *Housing and Construction: a troubled relationship*, published for the Joseph Rowntree foundation. UK investment in housing is around 3 per cent of GDP, compared with 6.1 per cent in Germany and 5.1 per cent in France.

The result is one of the oldest and poorest housing stocks in Europe. We build very low numbers of new homes in relation to the population, and demolish fewer than 10,000 houses a year in England.

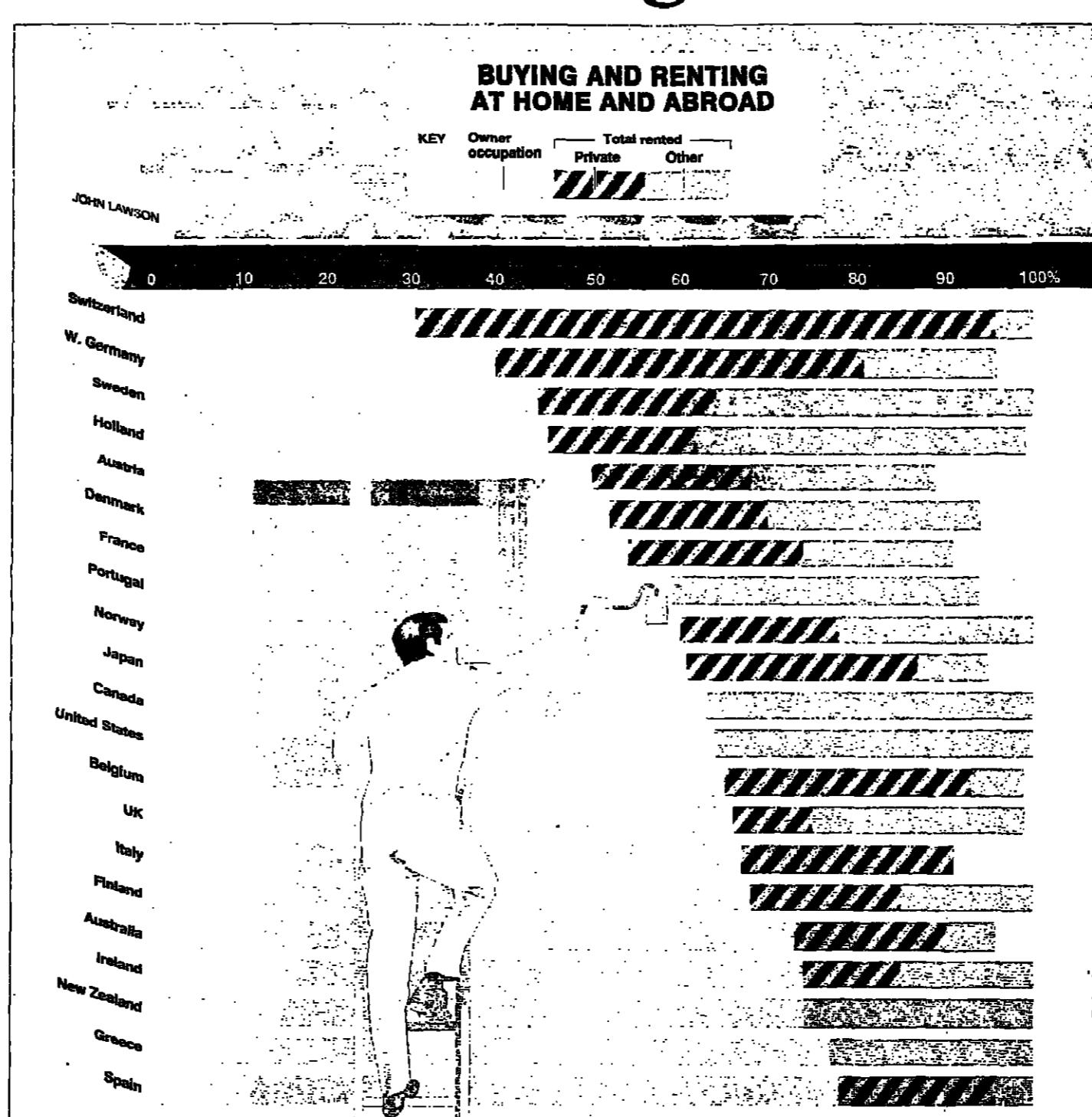
One reason for this low investment has been the absence of wartime destruction. Another is the attachment in Britain to pre-1945 housing stock. These older houses will probably remain popular indefinitely, but large numbers of inter-war houses are now ripe for demolition. Far from discouraging more entrepreneurial forms of investment, housing equity has been one of the few sources of finance for small business creation.

The third myth is that Britain's exceptionally high levels of owner-occupation

have created a rigid labour market in which people are unwilling to relocate for work. In fact, Britain's rate of home ownership — around 68 per cent — is not unusually high. It is in line with America, Canada, Italy and Japan. Around 85 per cent of the Spanish are homeowners. It is only slightly higher than in France. Only Germany has significantly lower home ownership and this is mainly because of the housing stock — more people live in flats, rather than in single-family houses.

Britain has a more flexible labour market than any other European country. Nor is there a necessary correlation between high levels of home ownership and successful economies. Bangladesh has 98 per cent home ownership. Yet Switzerland and Germany have the highest standards of living and the lowest rates of owner-occupation. It is a mistake to imagine there is a "correct" level of home ownership to which we should aspire.

What is unique about Britain's



good investment only when inflation is high: Britons should accept that houses are for nesting not investing."

The myth makes consumers believe that housing can never be a good investment if the Government is committed to low inflation. Since buying a house will always be a family's biggest investment decision, houses will simply not sell so long as people believe that housing is for nesting not investing.

But the idea that low inflation is bad for housing is untrue. The countries with the world's most expensive housing relative to incomes are Japan and Switzerland, which have the lowest inflation.

A more fundamental rebuttal is based on simple economics and finance. There is no clear link between general inflation and house price inflation. During the 1980s, retail price inflation was relatively low, but house prices began to rise strongly from the early 1980s onwards.

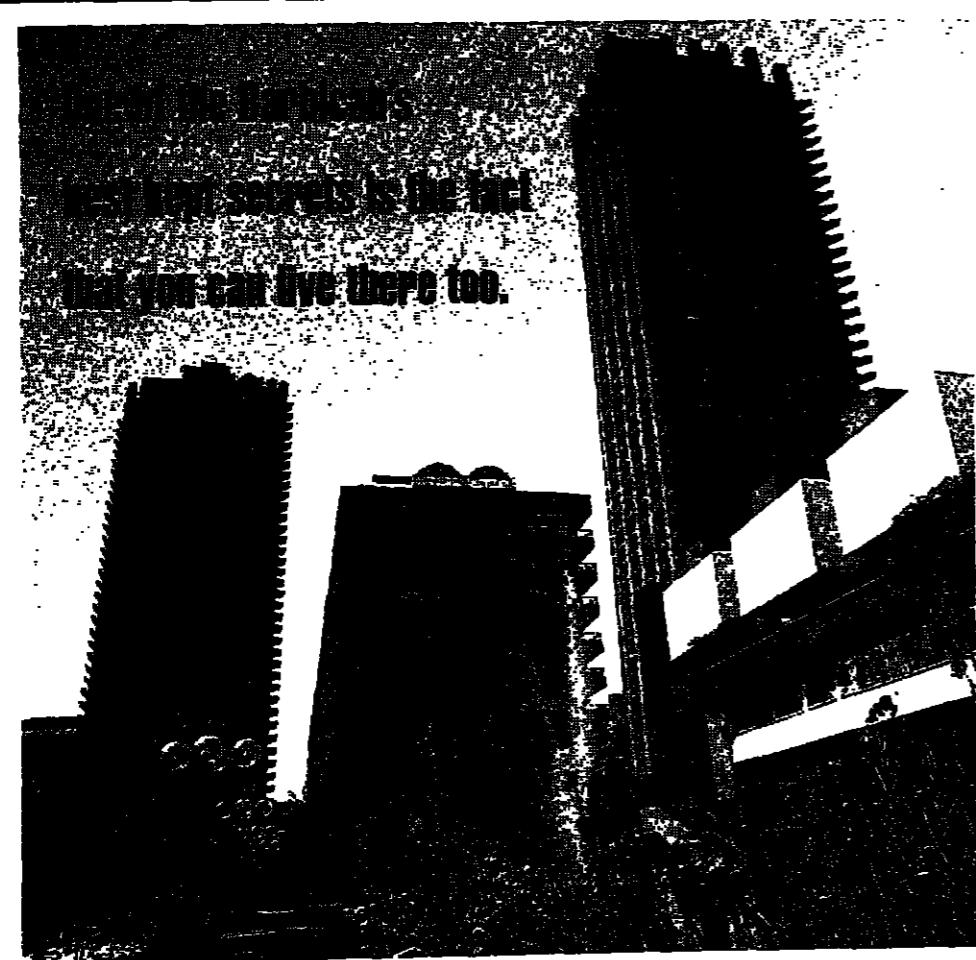
The truth is that house prices depend in the long term on two factors, neither of which is directly linked to inflation: personal incomes and interest rates. It is immaterial whether one looks at these two factors in money terms or in real terms. In the long run, house prices will always tend to rise in line with incomes — house-price-to-income ratios will remain roughly stable between one cycle and the next, provided real interest rates remain unchanged.

If real interest rates fall dramatically, as they did in the 1970s, this will raise the house-price-to-earnings ratio. But real interest rates are unlikely to remain far away from equilibrium for very long.

In the very long term, house prices tend to rise in line with earnings, because a house is a direct stake in the British economy. Housing services are a scarce resource, the demand for which rises in line with material prosperity, while supply is roughly fixed. Owning a house is closely analogous to owning a share in a commercial company called UK plc. History confirms that both housing and equity prices have risen at about the same rate as GDP and personal incomes.

For the general economy, the long-term outlook is good. The UK can look forward to many years of low inflation, low interest rates, reasonably high growth and falling unemployment, all of which underpin a healthy housing market.

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NEWS

Teachers to get own curriculum

A new "national curriculum" for teachers is to be announced tomorrow to make sure that young people entering the profession have the basic skills to teach children.

Teachers will also be given stronger powers to enforce discipline — even against parents' wishes — as part of the Government's attempt to raise standards in schools at a time when Britain's children are lagging behind Page 1

78 Tory rebels back Cash

The Conservative war over Europe flared dangerously when 78 Tory MPs defied John Major by backing a referendum and provoking an angry backlash from pro-Europeans. Senior Euro-enthusiasts called on Mr Major to show leadership by standing up to the Eurosceptics and bringing the policy of non-cooperation with Brussels to an end Pages 1, 11

Lottery row

The National Lottery Charities Board stood by its decision to distribute lottery money to gay and lesbian groups after the Prime Minister criticised the awards as "ill-founded and ill-judged" Page 1

Student demand

Students at Cambridge University are banting to change the centuries-old tradition of a seven-week summer term, the shortest in the world Page 9

Heart breakthrough

Elyse Bartlett, 4, from Fordingbridge, Hampshire, has become the first patient in England to undergo a hole-in-the-heart treatment that avoids surgery Page 9

Euro 96 dispute

As the Russian team lost its first game in Euro 96, a war of words broke out between London and Moscow over allegations that Britain had refused to grant visas to scores of fans Page 12

Divorce bill change

The Lord Chancellor signalled that he was prepared to accept two crucial changes to the Government's divorce law reforms in a last ditch attempt to save the Bill Page 2

Suicide pact

A young British graduate who killed herself in a suicide pact with her boyfriend at an American ranger was pregnant an inquest was told Page 3

Church plan rejected

City of London planners threw out the glass-fronted design proposed for the medieval church of St Ethelburga Page 5

British roots

The American millionaire who is giving his £75 million collection of gold and silver objects to the nation said: "I felt it should come back to its roots" Page 6

Venables accuses press 'traitors'

Terry Venables and his England football squad attempted to give the media a taste of their own medicine as a new scandal broke about three players drinking in a nightclub until the early hours of Sunday morning. Venables accused sections of the press of trying to turn the public against them and said he and his players considered them "traitors" Page 1



Skyscrapers protrude above the low-level fog that covered the business area of Chicago yesterday. The Sears Tower is on the right

BUSINESS

Stock Exchange: The London market has appointed a new chief executive to replace Michael Lawrence, who left in January Page 27

Electricity: The average household electricity bill is set to fall by between £15 and £20 a year following privatisation of British Energy, the nuclear generator Page 27

Demerger: Thorn EMI revealed details of its demerger but the City remains sceptical about whether the records business can stay independent Page 27

Markets: The FT-SE 100 Index rose 25.9 to 3755.7. The trade-weighted sterling index rose from 85.8 to 86.0 after a rise from \$1.5317 to \$1.5352 and a rise from DM2.3522 to DM2.3584 Page 30

SPORT

Football: The England players returned to their European championship training camp after their much-publicised break to find they will be without Steve Howey, who is injured Pages 47-49, 52

Cricket: The Northamptonshire v Warwickshire Benson and Hedges semi-final was nicely poised after a rain-interrupted day Page 50

Tennis: Tim Henman, the British No 1, fought back after losing the first set to beat Javier Frana, of Argentina, in the Stella Artois at Queen's Club Page 46

Rugby league: Andrew Farrell, the Wigan loose forward, has become, at 21, the youngest England captain. He leads the team against France in the European championship tonight Page 44

Art show: The witty anarchy of artist Claes Oldenburg is celebrated in a huge tribute at the Hayward Gallery Page 41

ARTS

Epic drama: The Shared Experience theatre company is preparing to stage Tolstoy's *War and Peace* at the National Theatre, all 1,400 pages of it Page 39

Solo efforts: Alan Bennett's wonderful monologues, *Talking Heads*, are brought to the stage by Maggie Smith and Margaret Tyzack at Chichester Page 39

Opera double: At the Maggio Musicale in Florence, Graham Vick stages a superb *Lucia di Lammermoor*, while English National Opera revives its grey and soulless production of *La Bohème* in London Page 40

Fashion: The weaker sex: Magazines are full of tales of unhappiness but it is not women who are suffering, says Nigella Lawson Page 17

FEATURES

Barelegged to the office: The really chic say its looks fine, women in senior jobs think it denotes diminished responsibility Page 16

Opera: The implications of the Birtian revolution Page 23

FASHION

When no means yes: Brenda Maddox sets out John Birt's assurances that the new blueprint for the BBC will not mean the end of the BBC as we know it but says that in fact it will Page 22

Spelling it out: The implications of the Birtian revolution Page 23

MEDIA

HOMES

Fairy tales: The myths surrounding the buying of houses in the UK need to be exposed Page 25

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

FILMS: Geoff Brown on Demi Moore in *The Juror*, and the rest of the week's new releases

BOOKS

Kate Bassett on medieval sexuality; Flora Fraser on *Lola Montez*; Martin Booth on opium

THE PAPERS

Yesterday's meeting could be the start of a process which will divert Irish history into a new channel. Given the potential of the process it was sad that the start was such a shambles. But this will be forgotten if the participants really do get down to work — particularly if the IRA allows Sinn Fein to take its place at the table

— *Irish Independent*

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Kate Bassett on medieval sexuality; Flora Fraser on *Lola Montez*; Martin Booth on opium

THE PAPERS

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— *Irish Independent*

HOMES

Fairy tales: The myths surrounding the buying of houses in the UK need to be exposed Page 25

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

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BOOKS

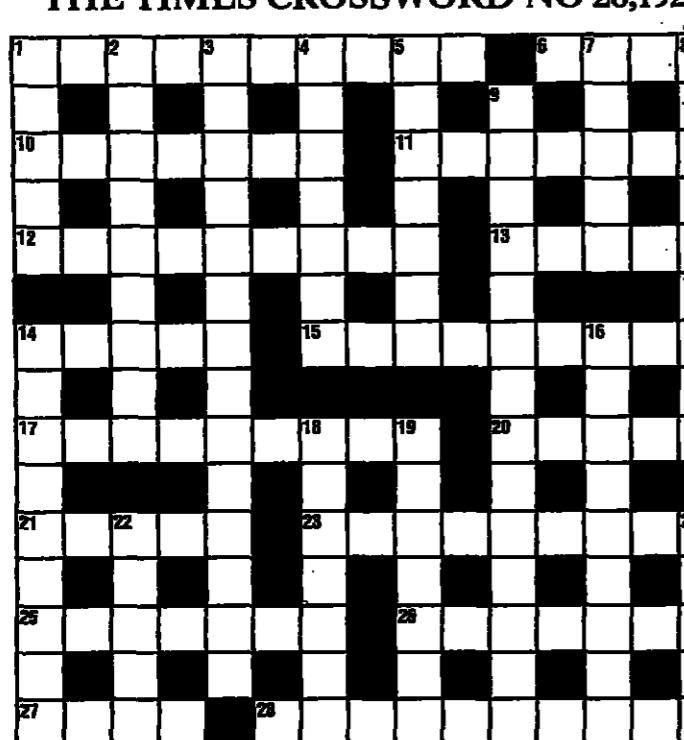
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THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,192



JENNY CAPARISIGN
UA E I E A P A
MADHATTER POINT
P I B E S T I D A
SCRIBE SIDEREREAL
T O T F R R
ANGLOPHILE SWAP
R D K I A L E I
TILL I M A G I N A B L E
D T B E D C
BASTILLE GURATE
A I C E S W M
SKINT FLUCTUATE
L T A U S A R A
ETIMICALLY YODER

Times Two Crossword, page 52
This puzzle was solved within 30 minutes by 69 per cent of the solo competitors in the London Regional Final of *The Times* Abcuber Crossword Championship and by 61 per cent of the pairs.
See *Tele2*, p.354.

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